Babylon Mystery Religion

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RALPH WOODROW
P. O. BOX 124
Riverside, California 92502

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ANCIENT AND MODERN



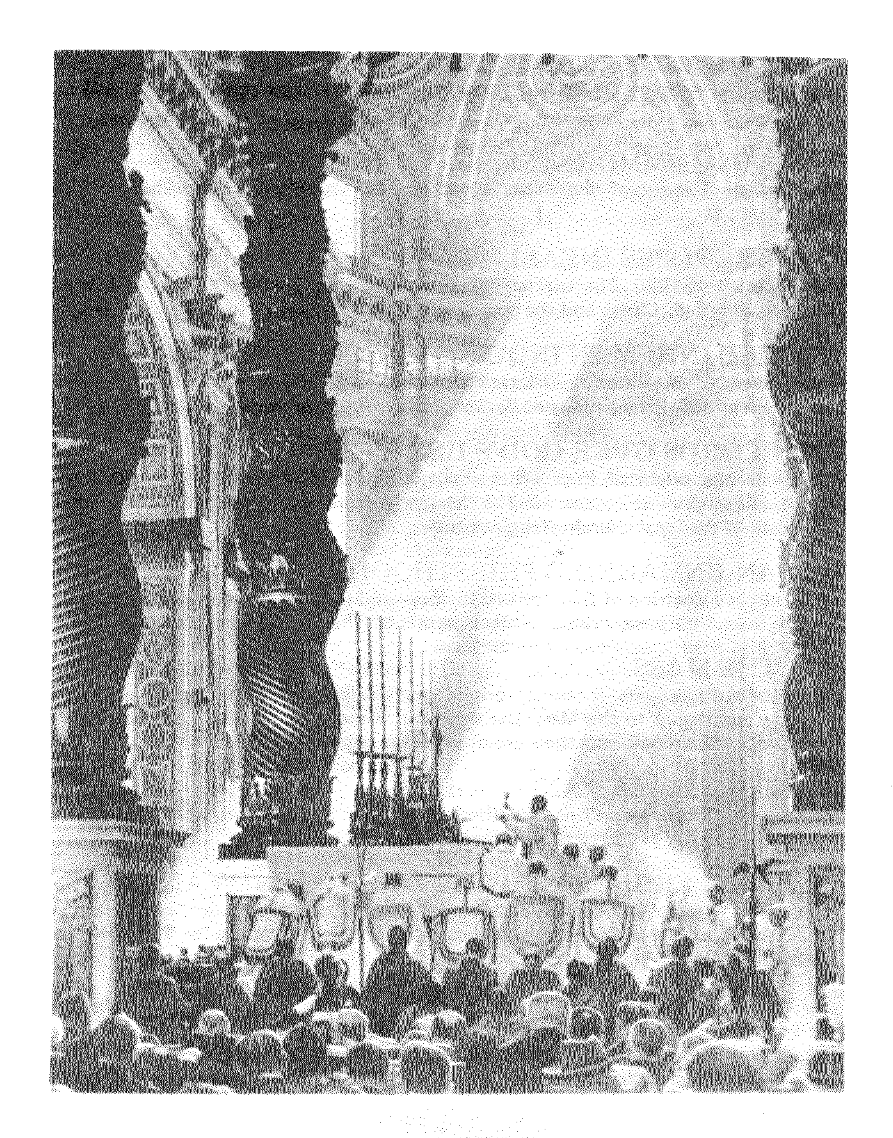


BABYLON MYSTERY RELIGION is a detailed Biblical and historical account of how, when, why, and where ancient paganism was mixed with Christianity. From the early days of Babylon and the legends surrounding Nimrod, Semiramis, and Tammuz, certain rites and rituals are traced in their various developments, thus providing clues whereby the "mystery" is solved! The apostles had predicted there would come a "falling away" and the proof of their prediction is now evident in history. With such evidence in hand, all true believers should seek, as never before, the simplicity found in Christ himself and to earnestly contend for that original faith which was once delivered unto the saints.



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CHAPTER ONE

Babylon - Source of False Religion

THE MYSTERY RELIGION of Babylon has been symbolically described in the last book of the Bible as a woman "arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:1-6).

When the Bible uses symbolic language, a "woman" can symbolize a church. The true church, for example, is likened to a bride, a chaste virgin, a woman without spot or blemish (Eph. 5:27; Rev. 19:7, 8). But in striking contrast to the *true* church, the woman of our text is spoken of as an unclean woman, a defiled woman, a harlot. If it is correct to apply this symbolism to a church system, it is clear that only a defiled and *fallen* church could be meant! In big capital letters, the Bible calls her "MYSTERY BABYLON."



When John wrote the book of Revelation, Babylon—as a city—had already been destroyed and left in ruins, as the Old Testament prophets had foretold (Isaiah 13:19-22; Jer. 51-52). But though the city of Babylon was destroyed, religious concepts and customs that originated in Babylon

continued on and were well represented in many nations of the world. Just what was the religion of ancient Babylon? How did it all begin? What significance does it hold in modern times? How does it all tie in with what John wrote in the book of Revelation?

Turning the pages of time back to the period shortly after the flood, men began to migrate from the east, "and it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there" (Gen. 11:2). It was in this land of Shinar that the city of Babylon was built and this land became known as Babylonia or later as Mesopotamia.

Here the Euphrates and Tigris rivers had built up rich deposits of earth that could produce crops in abundance. But there were certain problems the people faced. For one thing, the land was overrun with *wild animals* which were a constant threat to the safety and peace of the inhabitants (cf. Exodus 23:29,30). Obviously anyone who could successfully provide protection from these wild beasts would receive great acclaim from the people.

It was at this point that a large, powerfully built man by the name of Nimrod appeared on the scene. He became famous as a mighty hunter against the wild animals. The Bible tells us: "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty HUNTER before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord" (Gen.10:8,9).

Apparently Nimrod's success as a mighty hunter caused him to become famous among those primitive people. He became "a mighty one" in the earth—a famous leader in worldly affairs. Gaining this prestige, he devised a better means of protection. Instead of constantly fighting the wild beasts, why not organize the people into cities and surround them with walls of protection? Then, why not organize these cities into a *kingdom?* Evidently this was the thinking of Nimrod, for the Bible tells us that he organized such a kingdom. "And the beginning of his KINGDOM was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Caleh, in the land of Shinar" (Gen.10:10). The kingdom of Nimrod is the first mentioned in the Bible.

Whatever advances may have been made by Nimrod would have been well and good, but Nimrod was an ungodly ruler.

The name Nimrod comes from *marad* and means, "he rebelled." The expression that he was a mighty one "*before* the Lord" can carry a hostile meaning—the word "before" being sometimes used as meaning "against" the Lord.[1] *The Jewish Encyclopedia* says that Nimrod was "he who made all the people rebellious against God."[2]

The noted historian Josephus wrote: "Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God...He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God...the multitudes were very ready to follow the determination of Nimrod...and they built a tower, neither sparing any pains, nor being in any degree negligent about the work: and, by reason of the multitude of hands employed in it, it grew very high...The place wherein they built the tower is now called Babylon."[3]

Basing his conclusions on information that has come down to us in history, legend, and mythology, Alexander Hislop has written in detail of how Babylonian religion developed around traditions concerning Nimrod, his wife Semiramis, and her child Tammuz.[4] When Nimrod died, according to the old stories, his body was cut into pieces, burnt, and sent to various areas. Similar practices are mentioned even in the Bible (Judges 19:29; 1 Sam. 11:7). Following his death, which was greatly mourned by the people of Babylon, his wife Semiramis claimed he was now the sun-god. Later, when she gave birth to a son, she claimed that her son, Tammuz by name, was their hero Nimrod reborn. (The accompanying cut shows the way Tammuz came to be represented in classical art.) The mother of Tammuz had probably heard the prophecy of the coming Messiah to be born of a woman, for this truth was known from the earliest times (Gen. 3:15). She claimed her son was supernaturally conceived



Tammuz

and that he was the promised seed, the "savior." In the religion that developed, however, not only was the child worshipped, but the *mother* was worshipped also!

Much of the Babylonian worship was carried on through mysterious *symbols*—it was a "mystery" religion. The golden calf, for example, was a symbol of Tammuz, son of the sun-god. Since Nimrod was believed to be the sun-god or Baal, fire was considered as his earthly representation. Thus, as we shall see, candles and ritual fires were lighted in his honor. In other forms, Nimrod was symbolized by sun images, fish, trees, pillars, and animals.

Centuries later, Paul gave a description which perfectly fits the course that the people of Babylon followed: "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God...but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an IMAGE made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things...they changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the CREATURE more than the CREATOR...for this cause God gave them up unto vile affections." (Rom. 1:21-26).

This system of idolatry spread from Babylon to the *nations*, for it was from this location that men were scattered over the face of the earth (Gen.11:9). As they went from Babylon, they took their worship of the mother and child, and the various mystery symbols with them. Herodotus, the world traveler and historian of anitquity, witnessed the mystery religion and its rites in numerous countries and mentions how Babylon was the primeval source from which *all* systems of idolatry flowed. Bunsen says that the religious system of Egypt was derived from Asia and "the primitive empire in Babel." In his noted work *Nineveh and its Remains*, Layard declares that we have the united testimony of sacred and profane history that idolatry originated in the area of Babylonia —the *most ancient* of religious systems. All of these historians were quoted by Hislop.[5]

When Rome became a world empire, it is a known fact that she assimilated into her system the gods and religions from the various pagan countries over which she ruled.[6] Since Babylon was the source of the paganism of these countries, we can see how the early religion of pagan Rome was but the Babylonish worship that had developed into various forms and

under different names in the countries to which it had gone.

Bearing this in mind, we notice that it was during this time —when Rome ruled the world—that the *true* savior, Jesus Christ, was born, lived among men, died, and rose again. He ascended into heaven, sent back the Holy Spirit, and the New Testament church was established in the earth. What glorious days! One only has to read the book of Acts to see how much God blessed his people in those days. Multitudes were added to the church—the true church. Great signs and wonders were performed as God confirmed his word with signs following. True Christianity, anointed by the Holy Spirit, swept the world like a prairie fire. It encircled the mountains and crossed the oceans. It made kings to tremble and tyrants to fear. It was said of those early Christians that they had turned the world upside down!—so powerful was their message and spirit.

Before too many years had passed, however, men began to set themselves up as "lords" over God's people in place of the Holy Spirit. Instead of conquering by spiritual means and by truth—as in the early days—men began to substitute *their* ideas and *their* methods. Attempts to merge paganism into Christianity were being made even in the days when our New Testament was being written, for Paul mentioned that the "*mystery* of iniquity" was already at work, warned that there would come a "falling away" and some would "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils"—the counterfeit doctrines of the pagans (2 Thess. 2:3, 7; 1 Tim. 4:2). By the time that Jude wrote the book that bears his name, it was necessary for him to exhort the people to "earnestly contend for *the* faith that was ONCE delivered unto the saints", for certain men had crept in who were attempting to substitute things that were no part of the original faith (Jude 1:3, 4).


Christians martyred.

Christianity came face to face with the Babylonian paganism in its various forms that had been established in the Roman Empire. The early Christians refused to have

anything to do with its customs and beliefs. Much persecution resulted. Many Christians were falsely accused, thrown to the lions, burned at the stake, and in other ways tortured and martyred.

Then great changes began to be made. The emperor of Rome professed conversion to Christianity. Imperial orders went forth throughout the empire that persecutions should cease. Bishops were given high honors. The church began to receive worldly recognition and power. But for all of this, a great price had to be paid! Many compromises were made with paganism. Instead of the church being separate from the world, it became a part of this world system. The emperor showing favor, demanded a place of leadership in the church; for in paganism, emperors were believed to be gods. From here on, wholesale mixtures of paganism into Christianity were made, especially at Rome. We believe the pages which follow prove it was this *mixture* that produced that system which is known today as the Roman Catholic church. We do not doubt that there are many fine, sincere, and devout Catholics. It is not our intention to treat lightly or to ridicule anyone whose beliefs we may here disagree with. Instead, we would hope that this book would inspire people —regardless of their church affiliation —to forsake Babylonish doctrines and concepts and seek a return to *the* faith that was *once* delivered unto the saints.

CHAPTER TWO

Mother and Child Worship

ONE OF THE MOST outstanding examples of how Babylonian paganism has continued to our day may be seen in the way the Romish church invented Mary worship to replace the ancient worship of the mother goddess.

The story of the mother and child was widely known in ancient Babylon and developed into an established worship. Numerous monuments of Babylon show the goddess mother Semiramis with her child Tammuz in her arms.[1] When the people of Babylon were scattered to the various parts of the earth, they carried the worship of the divine mother and her child with them. This explains why many nations worshipped a mother and child—in one form or another—centuries before the true savior, Jesus Christ, was born into this world! In the various countries where this worship spread, the mother and child were called by different names, for, we will recall, language was confused at Babel.



The Chinese had a mother goddess called Shingmoo or the "Holy Mother." She is pictured with child in arms and rays of glory around her head.[2]

The ancient Germans worshipped the virgin Hertha with child in arms. The Scandinavians called her Disa who was also pictured with a child. The Etruscans called her Nutria, and among the Druids the Virgo-Patitura was worshipped as the "Mother of God." In India, she was known as Indrani, who was also represented with child in arms, as shown in the ac-

companying illustration.

The mother goddess was known as Aphodite or Ceres to the Greeks; Nana, to the Sumerians; and as Venus or Fortuna to her devotees in the olden days of Rome, and her child as Jupiter.[3] The accompanying illustration below shows the mother and child as Devaki and Crishna. For ages, Isi, the "Great Goddess" and her child Iswara, have been worshipped in India where temples were erected for their worship.[4]



Indrani and child



Devaki and Crishna

In Asia, the mother was known as Cybele and the child as Deoius. "But regardless of her name or place", says one writer, "she was the wife of Baal, the virgin queen of heaven, who born fruit although she never conceived."[5]

When the children of Israel fell into apostasy, they too were defiled with this mother goddess worship. As we read in Judges 2:13: "They forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth." Ashtaroth or Ashtoreth was the name by which the goddess was known to the children of Israel. It is pitiful to think that those who had known the true God would depart from him and worship the heathen mother. Yet this is exactly what they did repeatedly (Judges 10:6; 1 Sam.

7:3, 4; 12:10; 1 Kings 11:5; 2 Kings 23:13). One of the titles by which the goddess was known among them was "the queen of heaven" (Jeremiah 44:17-19). The prophet Jeremiah rebuked them for worshipping her, but they rebelled against his warning.

In Ephesus, the great mother was known as Diana. The temple dedicated to her in that city was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world! Not only at Ephesus, but throughout all Asia and the world was the goddess worshipped (Acts 19:27).

In Egypt, the mother was known as Isis and her child as Horus. It is very common for the religious monuments of Egypt to show the infant Horus seated on the lap of his mother.



Isis and Horus

This false worship, having spread from Babylon to the various nations, in different names and forms, finally became established at Rome and throughout the Roman Empire. Says a noted writer concerning this period: "The worship of the Great Mother... was...*very popular* under the Roman Empire. Inscriptions prove that the two (the mother and the child) received divine honors...not only in Italy and especially at Rome, but also in the provinces, particularly in Africa, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, and Bulgaria."[6]

It was during this period when the worship of the divine mother was very prominent that the savior, Jesus Christ, founded the *true* New Testament church. What a glorious church it was in those early days! By the third and fourth centuries, however, what was known as the "church" had in many ways departed from the original faith, falling into the apostasy about which the apostles had warned. When this "falling away" came, much paganism was mixed with Chris-

tianity. Unconverted pagans were taken into the professing church and in numerous instances were allowed to continue many of their pagan rites and customs—usually with a few reservations or changes to make their beliefs appear more similar to Christian doctrine.

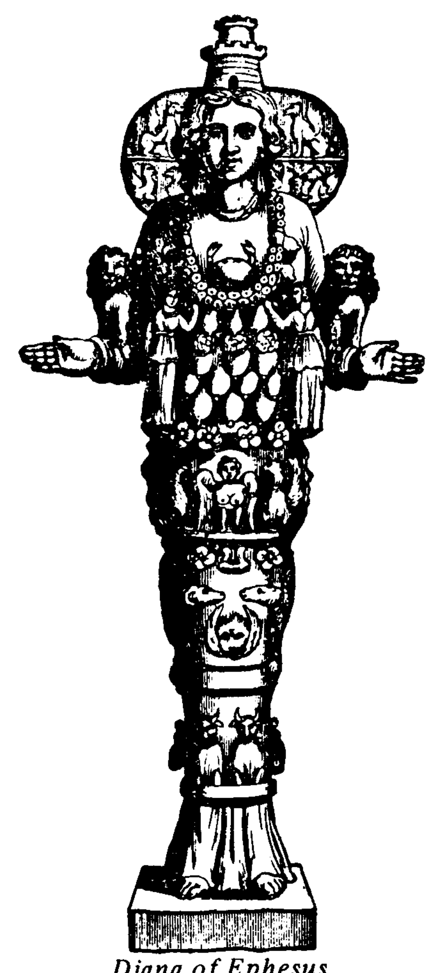
One of the best examples of such a carry-over from paganism may be seen in the way the professing church allowed the worship of the great mother to continue—only in a slightly different form and with a new name! You see, many pagans had been drawn to Christianity, but so strong was their adoration for the mother goddess, they did not want to forsake her. Compromising church leaders saw that if they could find some similarity in Christianity with the worship of the mother goddess, they could greatly increase their numbers. But who could replace the great mother of paganism? Of course, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was the most logical person for them to choose. Why, then, couldn't they allow the people to *continue* their prayers and devotion to a mother goddess, only call her by the name of Mary instead of the former names by which she was known? Apparently this was the reasoning employed, for this is exactly what happened! Little by little, the worship that had been associated with the pagan mother was transferred to Mary.

But Mary worship was *no part* of the original Christian faith. It is evident that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a fine, dedicated, and godly woman—especially chosen to bear the body of our savior—yet none of the apostles or Jesus himself ever hinted at the idea of Mary worship. As *The Encyclopedia Britannica* states, during the first centuries of the church, no emphasis was placed upon Mary whatsoever.[7] This point is admitted by *The Catholic Encyclopedia* also: "Devotion to Our Blessed Lady in its ultimate analysis must be regarded as a practical application of the doctrine of the Communion of Saints. Seeing that this doctrine is not contained, at least explicity, in the earlier forms of the Apostles' Creed, there is perhaps no ground for surprise if we do not meet with any clear traces of the cultus of the Blessed Virgin *in the first Christians centuries*," the worship of Mary being a later developement.[8]

It was not until the time of Constantine—the early part of the fourth century—that anyone began to look to Mary as a goddess. Even at this period, such worship was frowned upon

by the church, as is evident by the words of Epiphanius (d. 403) who denounced certain ones of Trace, Arabia, and elsewhere, for worshipping Mary as a goddess and offering cakes at her shrine. She should be held in honor, he said, "but let no one adore Mary."[9] Yet, within just a few more years, Mary worship was not only condoned by what is known today as the Catholic Church, it became an *official* doctrine at the Council of Ephesus in 431!

At *Ephesus?* It was in this city that Diana had been worshipped as the goddess of virginity and motherhood from primitive times![10] She was said to represent the generative powers of nature and so was pictured with many breasts. A tower-shaped crown, a symbol of the tower of Babel, adorned her head.



Diana of Ephesus

When beliefs are held by a people for centuries, they are not easily forsaken. So church leaders at Ephesus—as the falling away came—also reasoned that if people would be allowed to hold their ideas about a mother goddess, if this could be mixed into Christianity and the name Mary substituted, they could gain more converts. But this was not God's method. When Paul had come to Ephesus in earlier days, no compromise was made with paganism. People were *truly* converted and destroyed their idols of the goddess (Acts 19:24-27). How tragic that the church at Ephesus in

later centuries compromised and adopted a form of mother goddess worship, the Council of Ephesus finally making it an official doctrine! The pagan influence in this decision seems apparent.

A further indication that Mary worship developed out of the old worship of the mother goddess, may be seen in the *titles* that are ascribed to her. Mary is often called "The Madonna." According to Hislop, this expression is the translation of one of the titles by which the Babylonian goddess was known. In deified form, Nimrod came to be known as Baal. The title of his wife, the female divinity, would be the equivalent of Baalti. In English, this word means, "My Lady"; in Latin, "Mea Domina", and in Italian, it is corrupted into the well-known "Madonna"![11]

Among the Phoenicians, the mother goddess was known as "The Lady of the Sea"[12], and even this title is applied to Mary—though there is no connection between Mary and the sea!

The scriptures make it plain that there is *one* mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5). Yet Roman Catholicism teaches that Mary is also a "mediator." Prayers to her form a very important part of Catholic worship. There is no scriptural basis for this idea, yet this concept was not foreign to the ideas linked with the mother goddess. She bore as one of her names "Mylitta", that is "The Mediatrix" or mediator.

Mary is often called "the queen of heaven." But Mary, the mother of Jesus, is *not* the queen of heaven. "The queen of heaven" was a title of the mother goddess that was worshipped centuries before Mary was ever born. Clear back in the days of Jeremiah, the people were worshipping "the queen of heaven" and practicing rites that were sacred to her. As we read in Jeremiah 7:18-20: "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven."

One of the titles by which Isis was known was the "mother of God." Later this same title was applied to Mary by the theologians of Alexandria. Mary was, of course, the mother of Jesus, but only in the sense of his human nature, his humanity. The original meaning of "mother of God" went beyond this; it attached a glorified position to the MOTHER, and in much the same way, Roman Catholics have been taught to think of Mary!

So firmly written in the paganistic mind was the image of the mother goddess with child in her arms, when the days of the falling away came, according to one writer, "the ancient portrait of Isis and the child Horus was ultimately accepted not only in popular opinion, but by formal episcopal sanction, as the portrait of the Virgin and her child."[13] Representations of Isis and her child were often enclosed in a framework of flowers. This practice too was applied to Mary, as those who have studied Medieval art well know.

Astarte, the Phoenician goddess of fertility, was associated with the *crescent moon,* as seen on an old medal.



Astarte

The Egyptian goddess of fertility, Isis, was represented as standing on the *crescent moon* with stars surrounding her head.[14] In Roman Catholic churches all over Europe may be seen pictures of Mary exactly the same way! The accompanying illustration below (as seen in Catholic catechism booklets) pictures Mary with twelve stars circling her head and the crescent moon under her feet!

In numerous ways, leaders of the falling away attempted to make Mary appear similar to the goddess of paganism and exalt her to a divine plane. Even as the pagans had statues of the goddess, so statues were made of "Mary." It is said that in some cases, the *very same* statues that had been worshipped as Isis (with her child) were simply renamed as Mary and the Christ child. "When Christianity triumphed", says one writer, "these paintings and figures became those of the madonna and child



without any break in continuity: no archaeologist, in fact, can now tell whether some ot these objects represent the one or the other."[15]

Many of these renamed figures were crowned and adorned with jewels—in exactly the same way as the images of the Hindu and Egyptians virgins. But Mary, the mother of Jesus, was not rich (Luke 2:24; Lev. 12:8). From where, then, did these jewels and crowns come that are seen on these statues supposedly of her?

By compromises—some very obvious, others more hidden—the worship of the ancient mother was continued within the "church" of the falling away, mixed in, with the name of Mary being substituted in place of the older names.

CHAPTER THREE

Mary Worship

PERHAPS THE MOST outstanding proof that Mary worship developed out of the old worship of the pagan mother goddess may be seen from the fact that in pagan religion, the mother was worshipped as much (or more) than her son! This provides an outstanding clue to help us solve the mystery of Babylon today! True Christianity teaches that the Lord Jesus—and HE alone—is the way, the truth, and the life; that only HE can forgive sin; that only HE, of all earth's creatures, has ever lived a life that was never stained with sin; and HE is to be worshipped—*never his mother.* But Roman Catholicism—showing the influence that paganism has had in its development—in many ways exalts the MOTHER also.

One can travel the world over, and whether in a massive cathedral or in a village chapel, the statue of Mary will occupy a prominent position. In reciting the Rosary, the "Hail Mary" is repeated nine times as often as the "Lord's Prayer." Catholics are taught that the reason for praying to Mary is that she can take the petition to her son, Jesus; and since she is his *mother,* he will answer the request for her sake. The inference is that Mary is more compassionate, understanding, and merciful than her son Jesus. Certainly this is contrary to the scriptures! Yet this idea has often been repeated in Catholic writings.

One noted Roman Catholic writer, Alphonsus Liguori, wrote at length telling how much more effectual prayers are that are addressed to Mary rather than to Christ. Liguori, incidently, was canonized as a "saint" by Pope Gregory XIV in 1839 and was declared a "doctor" of the Catholic church by Pope Pius IX. In one portion of his writings, he described an imaginary scene in which a sinful man saw two ladders hanging from heaven. Mary was at the top of one; Jesus at the top of the other. When the sinner tried to climb the one ladder, he saw the angry face of Christ and fell defeated. But when he climbed *Mary's* ladder, he ascended easily and was

openly welcomed by Mary who brought him into heaven and presented him to Christ! Then all was well. The story was supposed to show how much easier and more effective it is to go to Christ through Mary.[1]



"Jacopone da Todi before the Blessed Virgin," after a woodcut (1490)

The same writer said that the sinner who ventures to come directly to Christ may come with dread of his wrath. But if he will pray to the Virgin, she will only have to "show" that son "the breasts that gave him suck" and his wrath will be immediately appeased![2] Such reasoning is in direct conflict with a scriptural example. "Blessed is the womb that bare thee", a woman said to Jesus,"and the paps that thou has sucked!" But Jesus answered, "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it" (Lk. 11:27, 28).

Such ideas about the breasts, on the other hand, were not foreign to the worshippers of the pagan mother goddess. Images of her have been unearthed which often show her breasts extremely out of proportion to her body. In the case of Diana, to symbolize her fertility, she is pictured with as many as one hundred breasts!

Further attempts to exalt Mary to a glorified position within Catholicism may be seen in the doctrine of the "immaculate conception." This doctrine was pronounced and defined by Pius IX in 1854—that the Blessed Virgin Mary "in the first instant of her conception...was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin."[3] It would appear that this teaching is only a further effort to make Mary more closely resemble the goddess of paganism, for in the old myths, the goddess was also believed to have had a supernatural conception! The stories varied, but all told of supernatural happenings in connection with her entrance into the world, that she was superior to ordinary mortals, that she was divine. Little by little, so that the teachings about Mary

would not appear inferior to those of the mother goddess, it was necessary to teach that Mary's entrance into this world involved a supernatural element also!

Is the doctrine that Mary was born without the stain of original sin scriptural? We will answer this in the words of *The Catholic Encyclopedia* itself: "*No* direct or categorical and stringent proof of the dogma can be brought forward from *Scripture.*" It is pointed out, rather, that these ideas were a *gradual developement* within the church.[4]

Right here it should be explained that this is a basic, perhaps *the* basic, difference between the Roman Catholic approach to Christianity and the general Protestant view. The Roman Catholic church, as it acknowledges, has long grown and developed around a multitude of traditions and ideas handed down by church fathers over the centuries, even beliefs brought over from paganism if they could be "Christianized" and also the scriptures. Concepts from all of these sources have been mixed together and developed, finally to become dogmas at various church councils. On the other hand, the view which the Protestant Reformation sought to revive was a return to the actual *scriptures* as a more sound basis for doctrine, with little or no emphasis on the ideas that developed in later centuries.

Going right to the scriptures, not only is any proof for the idea of the immaculate conception of Mary lacking, there is evidence to the contrary. While she was a chosen vessel of the Lord, was a godly and virtuous woman —a virgin— she was as much a *human* as any other member of Adam's family. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), the only exception being Jesus Christ himself. Like everyone else, Mary needed a savior and plainly admitted this when she said: "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my SAVIOR" (Lk. 1:47).

If Mary needed a savior, she was not a savior herself. If she needed a savior, then she needed to be saved, forgiven, and redeemed —even as others. The fact is, our Lord's divinity did not depend on his mother being some type of exalted, divine person. Instead, he was divine because he was the only begotten *son of God.* His divinity came from his heavenly Father.

The idea that Mary was superior to other human beings was

not the teaching of Jesus. Once someone mentioned his mother and brethren. Jesus asked, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" Then, stretching forth his hand toward his disciples, said, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For WHOSOEVER shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and MOTHER" (Matt. 12:46-50). Plainly enough, anyone who does the will of God is, in a definite sense, on the same level with Mary.

Each day Catholics the world over recite the Hail Mary, the Rosary, the Angelus, the Litanies of the Blessed Virgin, and others. Multiplying the number of these prayers, times the number of Catholics who recite them each day, someone has estimated that Mary would have to listen to 46,296 petitions a second! Obviously no one but God himself could do this. Nevertheless, Catholics believe that Mary hears all of these prayers; and so, of necessity, they have had to exalt her to the divine level —scriptural or not!

Attempting to justify the way Mary has been exalted, some have quoted the words of Gabriel to Mary, "Blessed art thou among women" (Lk. 1:28). But Mary being "blessed among women" cannot make her a divine person, for many centuries before this, a similar blessing was pronounced upon Jael, of whom it was said: "Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be . . ."(Judges 5:24).

Before Pentecost, Mary gathered with the other disciples waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit. We read that the apostles "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and *Mary* the mother of Jesus, and his brethren" (Acts 1:14). Typical of Catholic ideas concern-



ing Mary, the illustration (as seen in the *Official Baltimore Catechism*[5]) attempts to give to Mary a *central* position. But as all students of the Bible know, the disciples were not looking to Mary on that occasion. They were looking to their resurrected and ascended CHRIST to outpour on them the gift of the Holy Spirit. We notice also in the drawing that the Holy Spirit (as a dove) is seen hovering over *her!* Yet, as far as the scriptural account is concerned, the only one upon whom the Spirit as a dove descended was *Jesus himself* —not his mother! On the other hand, the pagan virgin goddess under the name of Juno was often represented with a dove on her head, as was also Astarte, Cybele, and Isis![6]

Further attempts to glorify Mary may be seen in the Roman Catholic doctrine of the *perpetual virginity.* This is the teaching that Mary remained a virgin throughout her life. But as *The Encyclopedia Britannica* explains, the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary was not taught until about three hundred years *after* the ascension of Christ. It was not until the Council of Chalcedon in 451 that this fabulous quality gained the *official* recognition of Rome.[7]

According to the scriptures, the birth of Jesus was the result of a *supernatural conception* (Matt. 1:23), without an earthly father. But after Jesus was born, Mary gave birth to other children —the *natural* offspring of her union with Joseph, her husband. Jesus was Mary's *"firstborn"* son (Matt. 1:25); it does not say he was her only child. Jesus being her firstborn child could certainly infer that later she had a second-born child, possibly a third-born child, etc. That such was the case seems apparent, for the names of four brothers are mentioned: James, Joses, Simon, and Judas (Matt. 13:55). Sisters are also mentioned. The people of Nazareth said: " . . . and his sisters, are they not *all* with us?" (verse 56). The word "sisters" is plural, of course, so we know that Jesus had at least *two* sisters and probably more, for this verse speaks of "all" his sisters. Usually if we are referring to only two people, we would say "both" of them, not "all" of them. The implication is that at least three sisters are referred to. If we figure three sisters and four brothers, half-brothers and half-sisters of Jesus, this would make Mary the mother of eight children.

The scriptures say: "Joseph . . . knew her not *till* she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name

JESUS" (Matt. 1:25). Joseph "knew her not" until after Jesus was born, but after that, Mary and Joseph did come together as husband and wife and children were born to them. The idea that Joseph kept Mary as a virgin all of her life is clearly unscriptural.

During the times of the falling away, as though to more closely identify Mary with the mother goddess, some taught that Mary's body never saw corruption, that she *bodily ascended into heaven,* and is now the "queen of heaven." It was not until this present century, however, that the doctrine of the "assumption" of Mary was *officially* proclaimed as a doctrine of the Roman Catholic church. It was in 1951 that Pope Pius XII proclaimed that Mary's body saw no corruption, but was taken to heaven.[8]

The words of St. Bernard sum up the Roman Catholic position: "On the third day after Mary's death, when the apostles gathered around her tomb, they found it empty. The sacred body had been carried up to the Celestial Paradise... the grave had no power over one who was immaculate... But it was not enough that Mary should be received into heaven. She was to be no ordinary citizen... she had a dignity beyond the reach even of the highest of the archangels. Mary was to be crowned Queen of Heaven by the eternal Father: she was to have a throne at her Son's right hand...Now day by day, hour by hour, she is praying for us, obtaining graces for us, preserving us from danger, shielding us from temptation, showering down blessings upon us."

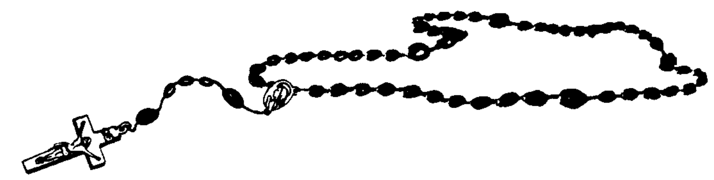


Assumption of Mary.

All of these ideas about Mary are linked with the belief that

she bodily ascended into heaven. But the Bible says absolutely nothing about the assumption of Mary. To the contrary, John 3:13 says: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" —Jesus Christ himself. HE is the one that is at God's right hand, HE is the one that is our mediator, HE is the one that showers down blessings upon us —not his mother!

Closely connected with the idea of praying to Mary is an instrument called the rosary. It consists of a chain with fifteen sets of small beads, each set marked off by one large bead. The ends of this chain are joined by a medal bearing the imprint of Mary. From this hangs a short chain at the end of which is a crucifix. The beads on the rosary are for counting prayers —prayers that are repeated over and over. Though this instrument is widely used within the Roman Catholic church, it is clearly not of Christian origin. It has been known in many countries.



The Catholic Encyclopedia says, "In almost all countries, then, we meet with something in the nature of prayer-counters or rosary-beads." It goes on to cite a number of examples, including a sculpture of ancient Nineveh, mentioned by Layard, of two winged females praying before a sacred tree, each holding a rosary. For centuries, among the Mohammedans, a bead-string consisting of 33, 66, or 99 beads has been used for counting the names of Allah. Marco Polo, in the thirteenth century, was surprised to find the King of Malabar using a rosary of precious stones to count his prayers. St. Francis Xavier and his companions were equally astonished to see that rosaries were universally familiar to the Buddhists of Japan.[9]

Among the Phoenicians a circle of beads resembling a rosary was used in the worship of Astarte, the mother goddess, about 800 B. C.[10] This rosary is seen on some early Phoenician coins. The Brahmans have from early times used rosaries with tens and hundreds of beads. The worshippers

of Vishnu give their children rosaries of 108 beads. A similar rosary is used by millions of Buddhists in India and Tibet. The worshipper of Siva uses a rosary upon which he repeats, if possible, all the 1,008 names of his god.[11]

Beads for the counting of prayers were known in Asiatic Greece. Such was the purpose, according to Hislop, for the necklace seen on the statue of Diana. He also points out that in Rome, certain necklaces worn by women were for counting or remembering prayers, the *monile,* meaning "remembrancer."[12]

The most often repeated prayer and the main prayer of the rosary is the "Hail Mary" which is as follows: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of death, Amen." *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says, "There is little or no trace of the Hail Mary as an accepted devotional formula before about 1050."[13] The complete rosary involves repeating the Hail Mary 53 times, the Lord's prayer 6 times, 5 Mysteries, 5 Meditations on the Mysteries, 5 Glory Be's, and the Apostles' Creed.

Notice that the prayer to Mary, the Hail Mary, is repeated almost NINE times as often as the Lord's prayer! Is a prayer composed by men and directed to Mary nine times as important or effective as the prayer taught by Jesus and directed to God?

Those who worshipped the goddess Diana repeated a religious phrase *over and over*—"...all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians" (Acts 19:34). Jesus spoke of repetitious prayer as being a practice of the *heathen.* "When ye pray," he said, "use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him" (Matt. 6:7-13). In this passage, Jesus plainly told his followers NOT to pray a little prayer over and over. It is significant to notice that it was right after giving this warning, *in the very next verse,* that he said: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven..." and gave the disciples what we refer to as "The Lord's Prayer." Jesus gave this prayer as an opposite to the heathen type of prayer. Yet Roman

Catholics are taught to pray this prayer over and over. If *this* prayer was not to be repeated over and over, how much less a little man-made prayer to Mary! It seems to us that memorizing prayers, then repeating them over and over while counting rosary beads, could easily become more of a "memory test" than a spontaneous expression of prayer from the heart.

CHAPTER FOUR

Saints, Saints' Days, and Symbols

IN ADDITION TO the prayers and devotions that are directed to Mary, Roman Catholics also honor and pray to various "saints." These saints, according to the Catholic position, are martyrs or other notable people of the church who have died and whom the popes have pronounced saints.

In many minds, the word "saint" refers only to a person who has attained some special degree of holiness, only a very unique follower of Christ. But according to the *Bible,* ALL true Christians are saints—even those who may sadly lack spiritual maturity or knowledge. Thus, the writings of Paul to Christians at Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth, or Rome, were addressed "to the saints" (Eph. 1:1, etc.). Saints, it should be noticed, were *living* people, not those who had died.

If we want a "saint" to pray for us, it must be a living person. But if we try to commune with people that have died, what else is this but a form of spiritism? Repeatedly the Bible condemns all attempts to commune with the dead (see Isaiah 8:19, 20). Yet many recite the "Apostles' Creed" which says: "We believe...in the *communion of saints,*" supposing that such includes the idea of prayers *for* and *to* the dead. Concerning this very point, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says: "Catholic teaching regarding prayers *for* the dead is bound up inseparably with the doctrine...of the *communion of saints* which is an article of the Apostles' Creed." Prayers "*to* the saints and martyrs collectively, or to some one of them in particular" are recommended.[1] The actual wording of the Council of Trent is that "the saints who reign together with Christ offer up their own prayers to God for men. It is good and useful suppliantly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, aid, and help for obtaining benefits from God."[2]

What are the objections to these beliefs? We will let *The*

Catholic Encyclopedia answer for itself. "The chief objections raised against the intercession and invocation of the saints are that these doctrines are opposed to the faith and trust which we should have *in God alone*...and that they cannot be proved from *Scriptures*..."[3] With this statement we agree. Nowhere do the scriptures indicate that the living can be blessed or benefited by prayers to or through those who have already died. Instead, in many ways, the Catholic doctrines regarding "saints" are very similar to the old *pagan* ideas that were held regarding the "gods."

Looking back again to the "mother" of false religion —Babylon—we find that the people prayed to and honored a plurality of gods. In fact, the Babylonian system developed until it had some 5,000 gods and goddesses.[4] In much the same way as Catholics believe concerning their "saints", the Babylonians believed that their "gods" had at one time been *living heroes on earth,* but were now on a *higher plane.*[5] "Every month and every day of the month was under the protection of a particular divinity."[6] There was a god for this problem, a god for each of the different occupations, a god for this and a god for that.

From Babylon—like the worship of the great mother—such concepts about the "gods" spread to the nations. Even the Buddhists in China had their "worship of various deities, as the goddess of sailors, the god of war, the gods of special neighborhoods or occupations."[7] The Syrians believed the powers of certain gods were limited to certain areas, as an incident in the Bible records: "Their gods are gods of the *hills*; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the *plain,* and surely we shall be stronger than they" (1 Kings 20:23).

When Rome conquered the world, these same ideas were very much in evidence as the following sketch will show. Brighit was goddess of smiths and poetry. Juno Regina was the goddess of womanhood and marriage. Minerva was the goddess of wisdom, handicrafts, and musicians. Venus was the goddess of sexual love and birth. Vesta was the goddess of bakers and sacred fires. Ops was the goddess of wealth. Ceres was the goddess of corn, wheat, and growing vegetation. (Our word "cereal", fittingly, comes from her name.) Hercules was the god of joy and wine. Mercury was the god of orators and, in the old fables, quite an orator himself,

which explains why the people of Lystra thought of Paul as the god Mercury (Acts 14:11, 12). The gods Castor and Pollux were the protectors of Rome and of travelers at sea (cf. Acts 28:11). Cronus was the guardian of oaths. Janus was the god of doors and gates. "There were gods who presided over every moment of a man's life, gods of house and garden, of food and drink, of health and sickness."[8]

With the idea of gods and goddesses associated with various events in life now established in pagan Rome, it was but another step for these same concepts to finally be merged into the church of Rome. Since converts from paganism were reluctant to part with their "gods"—unless they could find some satisfactory counterpart in Christianity—the gods and goddesses were renamed and called "saints." The old idea of gods associated with certain occupations and days has continued in the Roman Catholic belief in saints and saints'days, as the following table shows.

Actors	St. Genesius	August 25
Architects	St. Thomas	December 21
Astonomers	St. Cominic	August 4
Athletes	St. Sebastain	January 20
Bakers	St. Elizabeth	November 19
Bankers	St. Matthew	September 21
Beggars	St. Alexius	July 17
Book Sellers	St. John of God	March 8
Bricklayers	St. Steven	December 26
Builders	St. Vincent Ferrer	April 5
Butchers	St. Hadrian	September 28
Cab drivers	St. Fiarce	August 30
Candle-makers	St. Bernard	August 20
Comedians	St. Vitus	June 15
Cooks	St. Martha	July 29
Dentists	St. Appollonia	February 9
Doctors	St. Luke	October 18
Editors	St. John Bosco	January 31
Fishermen	St. Andrew	November 30
Florists	St. Dorothy	February 6
Hat makers	St. James	May 11
Housekeepers	St. Anne	July 26
Hunters	St.. Hubert	November 3
Laborers	St. James the Greater	July 25
Lawyers	St. Ives	May 19
Librarians	St. Jerome	September 30

Merchants	St. Francis of Assisi	October 4
Miners	St. Barbara	December 4
Musicians	St. Cecilia	November 22
Notaries	St. Mark the Evangelist	April 25
Nurses	St. Cathrine	April 30
Painter	St. Luke	October 18
Pharmacists	St. Gemma Galgani	April 11
Plasterers	St. Bartholomew	August 24
Printers	St. John of God	March 8
Sailors	St. Brendan	May 16
Scientists	St. Albert	November 15
Singers	St. Gregory	March 12
Steel workers	St. Eliguis	December 1
Students	St. Thomas Aquinas	March 7
Surgeons	S.S. Cosmas & Damian	September 27
Tailors	St. Boniface of Credtion	June 5
Tax Collectors	St. Matthew	September 21

The Roman Catholic Church also has saints for the following :

Barren women	St. Anthony	Old maids	St. Andrew
Beer drinkers	St. Nicholas	Poor	St. Lawrence
Children	St. Dominic	Pregnant women	St. Gerard
Domestic animals	St. Anthony	Television	St. Clare
Emigrants	St. Francis	Temptation	St. Syriacus
Family troubles	St. Eustachius	To apprehend thieves	St. Gervase
Fire	St. Lawrence	To have children	St. Felicitas
Floods	St. Columban	To obtain a husband	St. Joseph
Lightning storms	St. Barbara	To obtain a wife	St. Anne
Lovers	St. Raphael	To find lost articles	St. Anthony

Catholics are taught to pray to certain "saints" for help with the following afflictions:

Arthritis	St. James	Epilepsy, nerves	St. Vitus
Bite of dogs	St. Hubert	Fever	St. George
Bite of snakes	St. Hilary	Foot diseases	St. Victor
Blindness	St. Raphael	Gall stones	St. Liberius
Cancer	St. Peregrine	Gout	St. Andrew
Cramps	St. Murice	Headaches	St. Denis
Deafness	St. Cadoc	Heart trouble	St. John of God
Disease of breast	St. Agatha	Insanity	St. Dympna
Disease of eyes	St. Lucy	Skin disease	St. Roch
Disease of throat	St. Blase	Sterility	St. Giles

St. Hubert was born about 656 and appeared on our list as the patron saint of hunters and healer of hydrophobia. Before his conversion, almost all of his time was spent hunting. On a Good Friday morning, according to *legend,* he pursued a large stag which suddenly turned and he saw a crucifix between its antlers and heard a voice tell him to turn to God.



St. Hubert, patron of hunters, with St. Elizabeth.

But why pray to saints when Christians have access to *God?* Catholics are taught that through praying to *saints,* they may be able to obtain help that God otherwise might not give! They are told to worship God and then to "pray, first to Saint Mary, and the holy apostles, and the holy martyrs, and all God's saints....to consider them as friends and *protectors,* and to implore their aid in the hour of distress, with the hope that God would grant to the patron *what he might otherwise refuse* to the supplicant."[9] Everything considered, it seems evident that the Roman Catholic system of patron saints developed out of the earlier beliefs in gods devoted to days, occupations, and the various needs of human life.

Many of the old legends that had been associated with the pagan gods were transferred over to the saints. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* even says these "legends repeat the conceptions found in the *pre*-Christian religious tales...The legend is *not* Christian, only *Christianized*...In many cases it has obviously the same origin as the *myth*...Antiquity traced back sources, whose natural elements it did not understand,

to the heroes; such was also the case with many legends of the saints...It became easy to transfer to the Christian martyrs the conceptions which the *ancients* held concerning *their* heroes. This transference was promoted by the numerous cases in which Christian saints became the *successors* of local deities, and Christian worship supplanted the ancient local worship. This explains the *great number of similarities* between gods and saints."[10]

As paganism and Christianity were mixed together, sometimes a saint was given a similar sounding name as that of the pagan god or goddess it replaced. The goddess Victoria of the Basses-Alpes was renamed as St. Victoire, Cheron as St. Ceranos, Artemis as St. Artemidos, Dionysus as St. Dionysus, etc. The goddess Brighit (regarded as the daughter of the sun-god and who was represented with a child in her arms) was smoothly renamed as "Saint Bridget." In pagan days, her chief temple at Kildare was served by Vestal Virgins who tended the sacred fires. Later her temple became a convent and her vestals, nuns. They continued to tend the ritual fire, only it was now called "St. Bridget's fire."[11]

The best preserved ancient temple now remaining in Rome is the Pantheon which in olden times was dedicated (according to the inscription over the portico) to "Jove and all the gods." This was reconsecrated by Pope Boniface IV to "The Virgin Mary and all the *saints*." Such practices were not uncommon. "Churches or ruins of churches have been frequently found on the sites where *pagan* shrines or temples originally stood...It is also to some extent true that sometimes the *saint* whose aid was to be invoked at the Christian shrine bore some outward analogy to the *deity previously hallowed* in that place. Thus in Athens the shrine of the healer Asklepios...when it became a church, was made sacred to the two saints whom the Christian Athenians invoked as miraculous healers, Kosmas and Damian."[12]

A cave shown in Bethlehem as the place in which Jesus was born, was, according to Jerome, actually a rock shrine in which the Babylonian god Tammuz had been worshipped. The scriptures never state that Jesus was born in a cave.

Throughout the Roman Empire, paganism died in one form, only to live again within the Roman Catholic church. Not only did the devotion to the old gods continue (in a new form), but the use of *statues* of these gods as well. In some

cases, it is said, the very same statues that had been worshipped as pagan gods were renamed as Christian saints. Through the centuries, more and more statues were made, until today there are churches in Europe which contain as many as two, three, and four *thousand* statues.[13] In large impressive cathedrals, in small chapels, at wayside shrines, on the dashboards of automobiles—in all these places the idols of Catholicism may be found in abundance.

The use of such idols within the Roman Catholic Church provides another clue in solving the mystery of modern Babylon; for, as Herodotus mentioned, Babylon was the *source* from which *all* systems of idolatry flowed to the nations. To link the word "idols" with statues of Mary and the saints may sound quite harsh to some. But can this be totally incorrect?

It is admitted in Catholic writings that at numerous times and among various people, images of the saints have been worshipped in *superstitious* ways. Such abuses, however, are generally placed in the *past.* It is explained that in this enlightened age, no educated person actually worships *the object itself,* but rather what the object *represents.* Generally this is true. But is this not also true of heathen tribes that use idols (unmistakably *idols*) in the worship of demon-gods? Most of these do not believe the idol *itself* is a god, but only *representative* of the demon-god they worship.

Several articles within *The Catholic Encyclopedia* seek to explain that the use of images is proper on the basis of them being *representative* of Christ or the saints. "The honor which is given to them is referred to the objects which they represent, so that through the images which we *kiss,* and before which we uncover our heads and *kneel,* we adore Christ and venerate the saints whose *likenesses* they are."[14] Not all Christians are convinced, however, that this "explanation" is strong enough reason to bypass verses such as Exodus 20:4, 5: "Thou shalt not make unto thee *any* graven image, or any *likeness* of anything that is in *heaven* above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is underneath the earth: Thou shalt not *bow down* thyself to them."

In the Old Testament, when the Israelites conquered a heathen city or country, they were not to adopt the idols of these people into their religion. Such were to be destroyed, even though they might be covered with silver and gold!

"The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire; thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein; for it is an abomination to the Lord" (Deut. 7:25). They were to "destroy all their pictures" of pagan gods also (Numbers 33:52). To what extent these instructions were to be carried out under the New Testament has been often debated over the centuries. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* gives a historical sketch of this, showing how people fought and even died over this very issue, especially in the eighth century. Though upholding the use of statues and pictures, it says "there seems to have been a dislike of holy pictures, a suspicion that their use was, or might become, idolatrous, among certain Christians for many centuries," and mentions several Catholic bishops who were of this same opinion.[15] For people to fight and kill each other over this issue—regardless of which side they were on—was unmistakably contrary to the teachings of Christ.

The pagans placed a circle or aureole around the heads of those who were "gods" in their pictures. This practice continued right on in the art of the Romish church. The accompanying illustration is the way St. Augustine is shown in Catholic books—with a circular disk around his head. All Catholic saints are pictured this same way. But to see that this practice was borrowed from heathenism, we need only to notice the drawing of Buddha (illustration on page 38) which also features the circular symbol around his head! The artists and sculptors of ancient Babylon used the disk or aureola around any being they wished to represent as a god or goddess.[16] The Ro-



St. Augustine pictured with halo

mans depicted Circe, the pagan goddess of the sun, with a circle surrounding her head. From its use in pagan Rome, the same symbolism passed into papal Rome and has continued to this day, as evidenced in thousands of paintings of Mary and the saints. Pictures, supposedly of Christ, were painted with "golden beams" surrounding his head. This was exactly the way the sun-god of the pagans had been represented for centuries.



Buddha with halo

The church of the first four centuries used no pictures of Christ. The scriptures do not give us any description of the physical features of Jesus whereby an accurate painting could be made of him. It seems evident, then, that the pictures of Christ, like those of Mary and the saints, have come from the imaginations of artists.



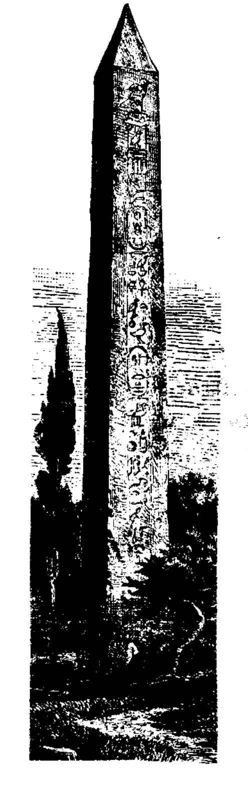
Circe

We only have to make a short study of religious art to find that in different centuries and among different nationalities, many pictures of Christ—some *very* different—may be found. Obviously all of these cannot be what he looked like. Besides, having now ascended into heaven, we no longer know him "after the flesh" (2 Cor. 5:16), having been "glorified" (John 7:39), and with a "glorious body" (Phil. 3:21), not even the best artist in the world could portray the King in his beauty. Any picture, even at its best, could never show how wonderful he *really* is!

CHAPTER FIVE

Obelisks, Temples, and Towers

AMONG THE ANCIENT nations, not only were statues of the gods and goddesses in *human* form made, but many objects that had a hidden or *mystery* meaning were a part of heathen worship. An outstanding example of this is seen in the use of the ancient obelisks.



Diodorus spoke of an obelisk 130 feet high that was erected by Queen Semiramis in Babylon.[1] The Bible mentions an obelisk-type image approximately nine feet in breadth and ninety feet high. "The people...fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up" in Babylon (Daniel 3:1-7). But it was in Egypt (an early stronghold of the mystery religion) that the use of the obelisk was best known. Many of the obelisks are still in Egypt, though some have been removed to other nations. One is in Central Park in New York, another in London, and others were transported to ROME.

Originally, the obelisk was associated with sun-worship, a symbol of "Baal" (which was a title of Nimrod). The ancients—having rejected the knowledge of the true creator—seeing that the sun gave life to plants and to man, looked upon the sun as a god, the great life giver. To them, the obelisk also had a sexual significance. Realizing that through sexual union life was produced, the phallus (the male organ of reproduction) was considered (along with the sun) a symbol of life. These were the beliefs represented by the

obelisk.[2]

The word "images" in the Bible is translated from several different Hebrew words. One of these words, *matzebah,* means "standing images" or obelisks (1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 18:4; 23:14; Jer. 43:13; Micah 5:13). Another word is *hammanim* which means "sun images", images dedicated to the sun or obelisks (Isaiah 17:8; 27:9).

In order for the obelisks to carry out their intended symbolism, they were placed upright—erect. Thus they pointed *up*—toward the sun. As a symbol of the phallus, the *erect* position also had an obvious significance. Bearing this in mind, it is interesting to notice that when divine judgment was pronounced against this false worship, it was said that these images (obelisks) "shall *not stand up*", but would be cast down (Isaiah 27:9).

When the Israelites mixed heathen worship into their religion in the days of Ezekiel, they erected an "image of jealousy in the *entry*" of the temple (Ezekiel 8:5). This image was probably an obelisk, the symbol of the phallus, for (as Scofield says) they were "given over to *phallic* cults."[3] Placing an obelisk at the entrance of a heathen temple was, apparently, not an uncommom practice at the time. One stood at the entrance of the temple of Tum and another in front of the temple of Hathor, the "abode of Horus" (Tammuz).[4]

Interestingly enough, there is also an obelisk at the entrance of St. Peter's in Rome, as the photograph shows on the next page. It is not a mere copy of an Egyptian obelisk, it is the very *same* obelisk that stood in Egypt in ancient times! When the mystery religion came to Rome in pagan days, not only were obelisks made and erected at Rome, but obelisks of Egypt—at great expense—were hauled there and erected by the emperors. Caligula, in 37-41 A.D., had the obelisk now at the Vatican brought from Heliopolis, Egypt, to his circus on the Vatican Hill, where now stands St. Peter's.[5] Heliopolis is but the Greek name of Bethshemesh, which was the center of Egyptian sun-worship in olden days. In the Old Testament, these obelisks that stood there are mentioned as the "images of Bethshemesh" (Jer. 43:13)!

The very same obelisk that once stood at the ancient temple which was the center of Egyptian paganism, now

stands before the mother church of Romanism! This seems like more than a mere coincidence.

The red granite obelisk of the Vatican is itself 83 feet high (132 feet high with its foundation) and weighs 320 tons. In 1586, in order to center it in front of the church in St. Peter's square, it was moved to its present location by order of Pope Sixtus V. Of course moving this heavy obelisk—especially in those days—was a very difficult task. Many movers refused to attempt the feat, especially since the pope had attached the *death penalty* if the obelisk was dropped and broken![6]

Finally a man by the name of Domenico Fontana accepted the responsibility. With 45 winches, 160 horses, and a crew of 800 workmen, the task of moving began. The date was September 10, 1586. Multitudes crowded the extensive square. While the obelisk was being moved, the crowd, upon

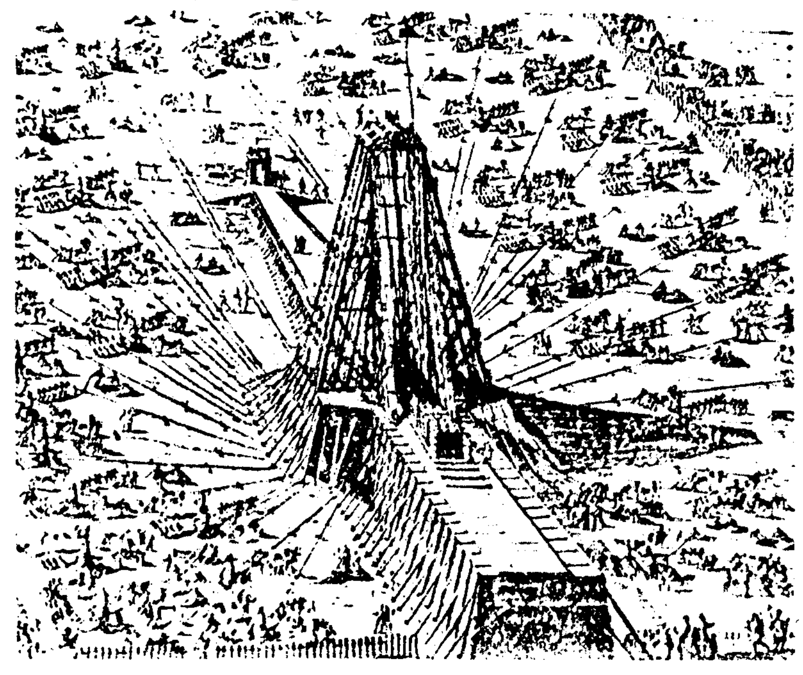


Obelisk in front of St. Peter's.

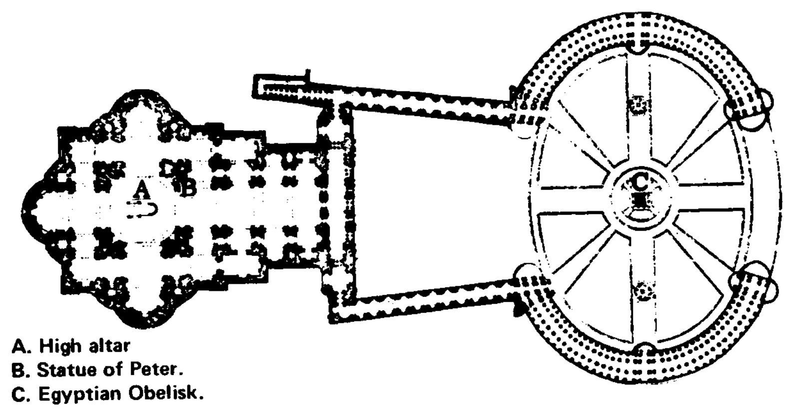
penalty of death, was required to remain silent. Finally, after near failure, the obelisk was erected—to the sound of hundreds of bells ringing, the roar of cannons, and the loud cheers of the multitude. The Egyptian idol was dedicated to the "cross" (the cross on top of the obelisk is supposed to contain a piece from the original cross), mass was celebrated, and the pope pronounced a blessing on the workmen and their horses.[7]

The drawing on the next page shows the pattern of St. Peter's and the circular court in front of it. At the center of this court stands the obelisk. This court is bordered by 248 Doric style columns which cost approximately one million dollars. The style for such columns was borrowed from the styling of pagan temples.

Like the obelisk, pagan columns were often regarded as "mystery" forms of the phallus. In the vestibule of the pagan temple of the goddess at Hierapolis, an inscription referring to the columns reads: "I, Dionysus, dedicated these *phalli* to Hera, my step-mother."[8]



Re-erecting the Vatican obelisk (from an old drawing).



Plan of St. Peter's

Even as Roman Catholic leaders borrowed other ideas from paganism, it is no surprise that building elaborate and expensive temples also became the custom. Worldly-minded leaders thought they should build a temple of greater splendor than those of the old Roman religion.

We know that God directed his people under the rulership of Solomon to build a temple—in the *Old* Testament—and chose to put his presence there. But in the New Testament, it is clear that the Holy Spirit no longer dwells in temples made with men's hands (Acts 17:24). Now, God dwells in his *people*—his true church—by the Spirit! Says Paul: "YE are the temple of God...the Spirit of God dwelleth in *you*" (1 Cor. 3:16). Understanding this grand truth, the early church—*filled with the Spirit*—never went forth to build temples of stone and steel. They went forth to preach the gospel. Their time was not spent in financial drives and oppressive pledges in order to build a fancier building than a temple down the street! According to *Halley's Bible Handbook,* we do not have a record of a church building (as such) being built prior to 222-235 A. D. !

This is not to suggest it is wrong to have church buildings. Probably the reason church buildings were not built earlier was because, due to persecutions, the first Christians were not allowed to own title to property. But had they been allowed this privilege, we feel certain that such buildings would have been built simply—not for outward show. They would not have tried to compete with the expensive styling of the heathen temples of splendor—like the temple of Diana at Ephesus or the Pantheon of Rome.

But when the church came to political power and wealth under the reign of Constantine, a pattern for building elaborate and expensive church buildings was set and has continued to this day. This idea has become so implanted in the minds of people, that the word "church" (to most people) means a *building.* But in its Biblical use, the word refers to an assembly or group of people who are—themselves—the temple of the Holy Spirit! As strange as it may sound, a church building could be totally destroyed, and yet the actual church (the people) remain.

The majority of expensive church buildings that have been built over the centuries have featured a *tower.* Each generation of church builders has copied the former generation, probably never questioning the *origin* of the idea. Some towers have cost fortunes to build. They have added no spiritual value. Jesus, of course, never built such structures when he was on earth, nor did he give any instructions for them to be built after his departure. How, then, did this tower tradition in church architecture begin?

If the reader will permit us a certain liberty at this point, we will suggest a theory which points back to Babylon. Of course we all remember the tower of Babel. The people said, "Let us make brick...let us build us a city *and a tower,* whose top may reach unto heaven" (Gen. 11:3,4). The expression "unto heaven" is no doubt a figure of speech for great height, as was also the case when cities with walls that reached "up to heaven" were mentioned (Deut. 1:28). We are not to suppose those Babel builders intended to build clear up in the heaven of God's throne. Instead, there is sufficient evidence to show that the tower (commonly called a "ziggurat") was connected with their religion—with sun-worship.

"Of all the lofty monuments of Babylon, the towering 'Ziggurat' must certainly have been one of the most spectacular constructions of its time, rising majestically above its huge encircling wall of a thousand *towers*...around the vast square, chambers were set aside for pilgrims, as well as for the priests who looked after the 'Ziggurat.' Koldewey called this collection of buildings the 'Vatican of Babylon'."[9]

It has been suggested that one of the meanings of the name of the goddess Astarte (Semiramis), written as "Asht-tart", means "the woman that made towers."[10] The goddess Cybele (who also has been identified with Semiramis) was

known as the tower bearing goddess, the first (says Ovid) that erected towers in cities and was represented with a tower-like crown on her head, as was also Diana (see page 17). In the symbolism of the Catholic church, a tower is emblematic of the virgin Mary![11] Does all of this somehow connect?

Some ancient towers, as we all know, were built for military purposes, for watchtowers. But many of the towers that were built in the Babylonian Empire were exclusively *religious* towers, connected with a *temple!* In those times, a stranger entering a Babylonian city would have no difficulty locating its temple, we are told, for high above the flat roofed houses, *its tower could be seen!*[12] *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says, "It is a striking fact that most Babylonian cities possessed a... temple-tower."[13]

Is it possible that Babylon (as with other things we have mentioned) could be the source for religious towers? We recall that it was while they were building the huge tower of Babel that the dispersion began. It is certainly not impossible that as men migrated to various lands they took the idea of a "tower" with them. Though these towers have developed into different forms in different countries, yet the towers in one form or another remain!

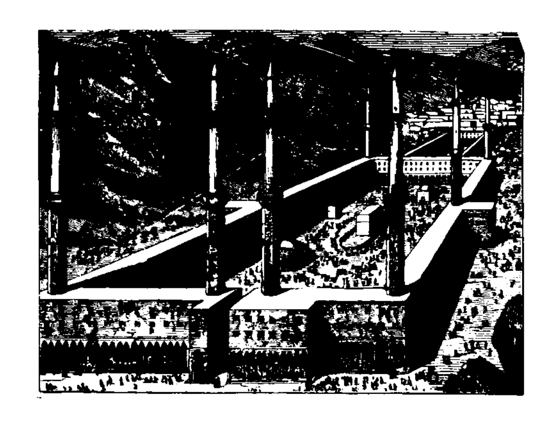


Pagoda at Nankin

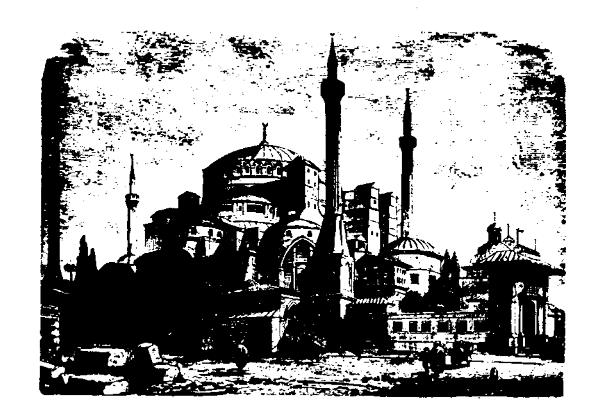
Towers have long been an established part of the religion of the Chinese. The "pagoda" (linked with the word "goddess") at Nankin is shown in our illustration.

In the Hindu religion, "scattered above the large temple inclosures are great pagodas or towers...rising high above the surrounding country, everywhere they could be seen by the people, and thus their devotion to their idolatrous worship was increased. Many of these pagodas are several hundred feet high, and are covered with sculptures representing scenes in the lives of the gods of the temple, or of eminent saints."[14]

Among the Mohammedans also, though in a somewhat different form, can be seen the towers of their religion. The first illustration on the following page shows the numerous towers, called minarets, at Mecca. Towers of this style were also used at the famous Church of St. Sophia



The numerous towers at Mecca.



The Church of St. Sophia at Constantinople

at Constantinople (above illustration).

The use of towers is also carried out in Christendom—Catholic and Protestant. The tower of the great Cathedral of Cologne rises 515 feet above the street while that of the Cathedral of Ulm, Germany, is 528 feet high. Even small chapels often have a tower of some kind. It is a tradition that is seldom questioned.

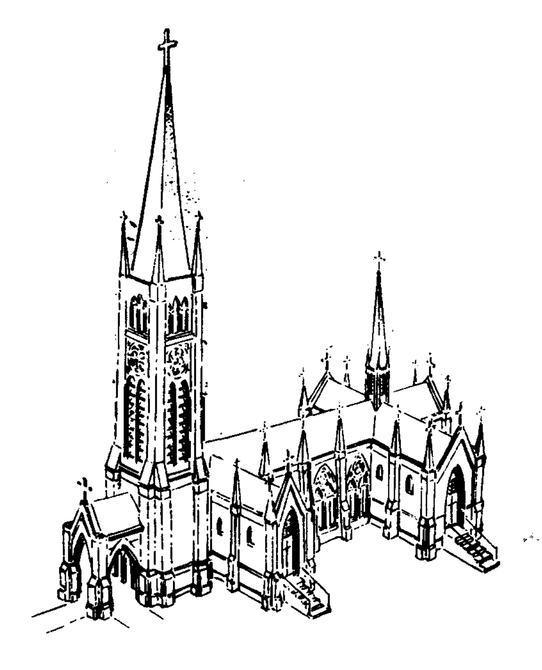
At the top of many church towers, a spire often points to the sky! Several writers link, and perhaps not without some justification, the steeples and spires with the ancient obelisk. "There is evidence", says one, "to show that the spires of our churches owe their existence to the uprights or obelisks outside the temples of former ages."[15] Another says: "There are still in existence today remarkable specimens of original phallic symbols...steeples on the churches...and obelisks...all show the influence of our phallus-worshipping ancestors."[16]

CHAPTER SIX

Is the Cross a Christian Symbol?

THE CROSS IS recognized as one of the most important symbols of the Roman Catholic Church. It is displayed on top of roofs and towers. It is seen on altars, furnishings, and ecclesiastical garments. The floor plan of the majority of Catholic churches is laid out in the shape of the cross. All Catholic homes, hospitals, and schools have the cross adorning the walls. Everywhere the cross is outwardly honored and adored—in hundreds of ways!

When an infant is sprinkled, the priest makes the sign of the cross upon its forehead saying: "Receive the sign of the cross upon thy forehead." During confirmation, the candidate is signed with the cross. On Ash Wednesday, ashes are used to make a cross on the forehead. When Catholics enter



the church building, they dip the forefinger of the right hand in "holy water", touch the forehead, the chest, the left and the right shoulder—thus tracing the figure of the cross. The same sign is made before eating meals. During Mass, the priest makes the sign of the cross 16 times and blesses the altar with the cross sign 30 times.

Protestant churches, for the most part, do not believe in making the sign of the cross with their fingers. Neither do they bow down before crosses or use them as objects of worship. They have recognized that these things are unscriptural and superstitious. But the use of the cross has been commonly retained on steeples, on pulpits, and in various other ways as a form of decoration.

The early Christians did not consider the cross as a virtuous symbol, but rather as "the accursed tree", a device of death and "shame" (Heb. 12:2). They did not trust in an old rugged cross. Instead, their faith was in *what was accomplished on the cross;* and through this faith, they knew the full and complete forgiveness of sin! It was *in this sense* that the apostles preached about the cross and gloried in it (1 Cor. 1:17, 18). They *never* spoke of the cross as a piece of wood one might hang from a little chain around his neck or carry in his hand as a protector or charm. Such uses of the cross came later.

It was not until Christianity began to be *paganized* (or, as some prefer, paganism was Christianized), that the cross image came to be thought of as a Christian symbol. It was in 431 that crosses in churches and chambers were introduced, while the use of crosses on steeples did not come until about 586.[1] In the sixth century, the crucifix image was sanctioned by the church of Rome.[2] It was not until the second Council at Ephesus that private homes were required to possess a cross.[3]

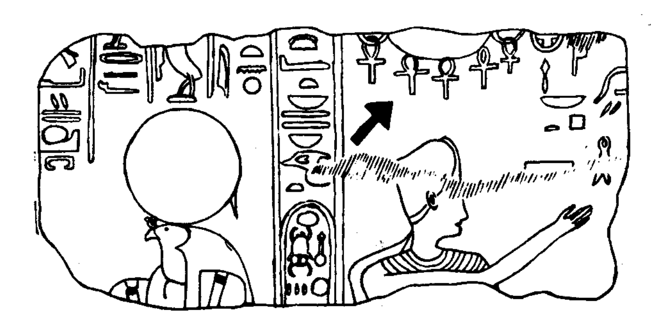
If the cross is a Christian symbol, it cannot be correctly said that its *origin* was within Christianity, for in one form or another it was a sacred symbol long *before* the Christian Era and among many *non-Christian* people. According to *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words,* the cross originated among the Babylonians of ancient Chaldea. "The ecclesiastical form of a two beamed cross...had its origin in ancient Chaldea, and was used as the symbol of the god *Tammuz* (being in the shape of the Mystic Tau, the initial

of his name) in that country and in adjacent lands, including Egypt...In order to increase the prestige of the apostate ecclesiastical system, pagans were received into the churches apart from regeneration by faith, and were permitted largely to retain their pagan signs and symbols. Hence the Tau or T, in its most frequent form, with the cross-piece lowered, was *adopted* to stand for the cross of Christ"![4]



AMON.

In *any* book on Egypt that shows the old monuments and walls of ancient temples, one can see the use of the Tau cross. The accompanying illustration shows the Egyptian god Amon holding a Tau cross.



This illustration, taken from a building at Amenophis IV at Thebes, Egypt, shows a king praying. Notice the round sun circle with a mystery form of the sun-god beneath it. Says a noted historian in reference to Egypt: "Here unchanged for thousands of years, we find among her most sacred hieroglyphics the cross in various forms...but the one known specially as the 'cross of Egypt', or the Tau cross, is shaped like the letter T, often with a circle or ovoid above it. Yet this mystical symbol was not peculiar to this country, but was reverenced...among the Chaldeans, Phoenicians, Mexicans, and *every* ancient people in both hemispheres."[5]

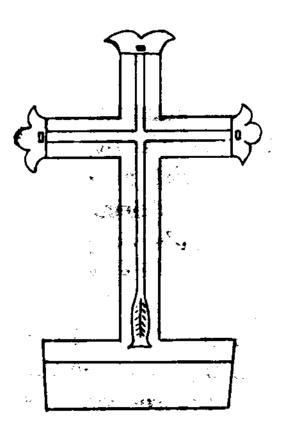
As the cross symbol spread to various nations, its use developed in different ways. Among the Chinese, "the cross is... acknowledged to be one of the most ancient devices...it is portrayed upon the walls of their pagodas, it is painted upon the lanterns used to illuminate the most sacred recesses of their temples."[6]

The cross has been a sacred symbol in India for centuries among non-Christian people. It has been used to mark the jars of holy water taken from the Ganges, also as an emblem of disembodied Jaina saints. In the central part of India, two crude crosses of stone have been discovered which date back to a time centuries before the Christian Era—one over ten feet, the other over eight feet high. The Buddhists, and numerous other sects of India, marked their followers on the head with the sign of the cross.[7]

On the continent of Africa, at Susa, natives plunge a cross into the River Gitche. The Kabyle women, although Mohammedans, tatoo a cross between their eyes. In Wanyamwizi walls are decorated with crosses. The Yaricks, who established a line of kingdoms from the Niger to the Nile, had an image of a cross painted on their shields.[8]

When the Spaniards first landed in Mexico, "they could not suppress their wonder", says Prescott, "as they beheld the cross, the sacred emblem of their own faith, raised as an object of worship in the temples of Anahuac. The Spaniards were not aware that the cross was the symbol of worship of the *highest antiquity*...by pagan nations on whom the light of Christianity had never shone."[9]

In Palenque, Mexico, founded by Votan in the ninth century before the Christian Era, is a heathen temple known as "The Temple of the Cross." There inscribed on an altar slab is a central cross six and a half by eleven feet in size. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* includes a photograph of this cross, beneath which are the words "Pre-Christian Cross of Palenque."[10]



In olden times, the Mexicans worshipped a cross as *tota* (our father). This practice of addressing a piece of

wood with the title "father" is also mentioned in the Bible. When the Israelites mixed idolatry with their religion, they said to a stock, "Thou art my *father*" (Jer. 2:27). But it is contrary to the scriptures to call a piece of wood (or a priest) by the title "father."

Ages ago in Italy, before the people knew anything of the arts of civilization, they believed in the cross as a religious symbol. It was regarded as a protector and was placed upon tombs. In 46 B.C., Roman coins show Jupiter holding a long scepter terminating in a cross.[11] The Vestal Virgins of pagan Rome wore the cross suspended from their necklaces, as the nuns of the Roman Catholic church do now.[12]



The Greeks depicted crosses on the headband of their god corresponding to Tammuz of the Babylonians. Porcelli mentions that Isis was shown with a cross on her forehead. Her priests carried processional crosses in their worship of her. The temple of Serapis in Alexandria was surmounted by a cross. The temple of the Sphinx when it was unearthed was found to be cruciform in shape. Ensigns in the form of a cross were carried by the Persians during their battles with Alexander the Great (B.C. 335).

The cross was used as a religious symbol by the Aborigines of South America in ancient times. New born children were placed under its protection against evil spirits. The Patagonians tatooed their foreheads with crosses. Ancient pottery in Peru has been found that is marked with the cross as a religious symbol. Monuments show that Assyrian kings wore crosses suspended on their necklaces, as did some of the foreigners that battled against the Egyptians.[13]



Crosses were also figured on the robes of the Rot-n-no as early as the fifteenth century before the Christian Era.[14]

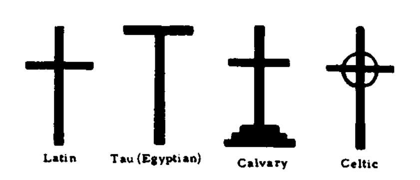
The Catholic Encyclopedia acknowledges that "the sign of the cross, represented in its

simplest form by a crossing of two lines at right angles, greatly antedates, in both the East and the West, the introduction of Christianity. It goes back to a *very remote* period of human civilization."[15]

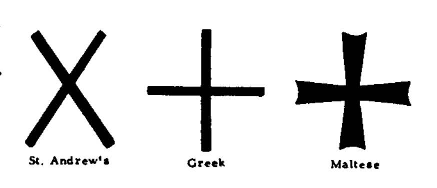
"But since Jesus died on a cross", some question, "does this not make it a Christian symbol?" It is true that in most minds the cross has now come to be associated with Christ. But those who know its history and the superstitious ways it has been used—especially in past centuries—can see another side of the coin. Though it sounds crude, someone has asked: "Suppose Jesus had been killed with a shotgun; would this be any reason to have a shotgun hanging from our necks or on top of the church roof?" It comes down to this: The important thing is not what, but *who*—*who* it was that died, not *what* the instrument of death was. St. Ambrose made a valid point when he said, "Let us adore Christ, our King, who hung upon the wood, and *not the wood*."

Crucifixion as a method of death "was used in ancient times as a punishment for flagrant crimes in Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Palestine, Carthage, Greece, and Rome...Tradition ascribes the invention of the punishment of the cross to a woman, the queen *Semiramis*"![16]

Christ died on *one* cross—whatever type it was—and yet *many* kinds of crosses are used in the Catholic religion. A *few* different types are shown here. A page in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* shows forty. If the Roman Catholic use of the cross began simply with the *cross of Christ*—and was not influenced by paganism—why are *so many different* types of crosses used?



Says a noted writer: "Of the several varieties of the cross still in vogue, as national and ecclesiastical emblems, distinguished by the familiar appellations of St. George, St. Andrew, the Maltese, the Greek, the Latin, etc., there is not one amongst them the existence

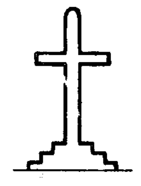


of which may not be traced to the *remotest antiquity*"![17]

The cross known as the TAU cross was widely used in Egypt. "In later times the Egyptian Christians (Copts), attracted by its form, and perhaps by its symbolism, *adopted* it *as* the emblem of the cross."[18] What is known as the GREEK cross was also found on Egyptian monuments. This form of the cross was used in Phrygia where it adorned the tomb of Midas. Among the ruins of Nineveh, a king is shown wearing a MALTESE cross on his chest. The form of the cross that is today known as the LATIN cross was used by the Etruscans, as seen on an ancient pagan tomb with winged angels to each side of it.



Among the Cumas in South America, what has been called the ST. ANDREW'S cross, was regarded as a protector against evil spirits.[19] It appeared on the coins of Alexander Bala in Syria in 146 B.C. and on those of Baktrian kings about 140 to 120 B.C.—long before "St. Andrew" was ever born! The cross which we show here is today called the CALVARY cross, yet this drawing is from an ancient inscription in Thessaly which dates from a period prior to the Christian Era!



A final question remains. Jesus died on *one* cross—what shape was it? Some believe it was simply a torture stake with no cross piece whatsoever. The word "cross" automatically conveys the meaning that two pieces of wood *cross* each other at some point or angle. But the Greek word from which "cross" is translated in the New Testament, *stauros,* does not require this meaning. The word itself simply means an upright stake or post.[20] If the instrument on which Jesus died was no more than this, it was not a "cross" (as such) at all! This would clearly show the folly of many types of crosses being "Christianized." But we need not insist on this conclusion.

The statement of Thomas about the print of *nails* (plural) in the hands of Jesus (John 20:25) would seem to indicate a cross piece, for on a single stake his hands would have probably been driven through with one nail. Allowing room above his head for the inscription (Luke 23:38), these things would tend to favor what has been termed the Latin cross.

Crosses shaped like a "T" or "X" can be eliminated since these would probably not allow sufficient room above the head for the inscription.

As to the exact shape of the cross of Christ, we need not be too concerned. All such arguments fade into insignificance when compared to the *real* meaning of the cross—not the piece of wood—but the eternal redemption of Christ.



Constantine's "vision" of the cross.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Constantine and the Cross

AN OUTSTANDING FACTOR THAT contributed to the adoration of the cross image within the Romish church was the famous "vision of the cross" and subsequent "conversion" of Constantine. As he and his soldiers approached Rome, they were about to face what is known as the Battle of Milvian Bridge. According to the custom of the time, the haruspices (those who employed divination by such means as reading the entrails of sacrificial animals) were called to give advice. (The use of divination before battles was also practiced by the king of Babylon: "For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver"—Ezekiel 21: 21.) In the case of Constantine, he was told that the gods would not come to his aid, that he would suffer defeat in the battle. But then in a vision or dream, as he related later, there appeared a cross to him and the words, "In this sign conquer." The next day—October 28, 312—he advanced behind a standard portraying a cross. He was victorious in that battle, defeated his rival, and professed conversion. Of course such a *seeming* victory for Christianity did much to further the use of the cross in the Romish church.

It is admitted on all sides, however, that Constantine's vision of the cross is probably not historically true. The only authority from whom the story has been gathered by historians is Eusebius, who confessedly was prone to edification and was accused as a "falsifier of history." But if Constantine did have such a vision, are we to suppose its author was Jesus Christ? Would the Prince of Peace instruct a pagan emperor to make a military banner embodying the cross and to go forth conquering and killing in that sign?

The Roman Empire (of which Constantine became the head) has been described in the Scriptures as a "beast."


Babylon


Medo-Persia


Greece


Rome

Daniel saw four great beasts which represented four world empires—Babylon (a lion), Medo-Persia (a bear), Greece (a leopard), and Rome. The fourth beast, the Roman Empire, was so horrible that it was symbolized by a beast unlike any other (Daniel 7:1-8). We see no reason to suppose that Christ would tell Constantine to conquer with the sign of the cross to further the beast system of Rome!

But if the vision was not of God, how can we explain the *conversion* of Constantine? Actually, his conversion is to be seriously questioned. Even though he had much to do with the establishment of certain doctrines and customs within the church, the facts plainly show that he was not *truly* converted—not in the *Biblical* sense of the word. Historians admit that his conversion was "nominal, even by contemporary standards."[1]

Probably the most obvious indication that he was not truly converted may be seen from the fact that *after* his conversion, he committed several *murders*—including the murder of his own wife and son! According to the Bible "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15). Constantine's first marriage was to Minervina, by whom he had a son named Crispus. His second wife, Fausta, bore him three daughters and three sons. Crispus became an outstanding soldier and help to his father. Yet, in 326—very shortly after directing the Nicaean Council—he had his son put to death. The story is that Crispus had made love to Fausta. At least this was the accusation of Fausta. But this may have been her method of getting him out of the way, so one of *her* sons might have claim to the throne! Constantine's mother, however, persuaded him that his wife "had yielded to his son." Constantine had Fausta suffocated to death in an overheated bath. About this same time he had his sister's son flogged to death and his sister's husband strangled—even though he had promised he would spare his life.[2]

These things are summed up in the following words from *The Catholic Encyclopedia*: "Even after his conversion he caused the execution of his brother-in-law Licinius, and of the latter's son, as well as of Crispus his own son by his

first marriage, and of his wife Fausta...After reading these cruelities it is hard to believe that the same emperor could at times have mild and tender impulses; but human nature is full of contradictions."[3]

Constantine did show numerous favors toward the Christians, abolished death by crucifixion, and the persecutions which had become so cruel at Rome ceased. But did he make these decisions purely from Christian convictions or did he have *political* motives for doing so? *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says, "Some bishops, blinded by the splendor of the court, even went so far as to laud the emperor as an angel of God, as a sacred being, and to prophesy that he would, like the Son of God, reign in heaven. It has consequently been asserted that Constantine favored Christianity merely from *political* motives, and he has been regarded as an enlightened despot who made use of religion only to advance his policy."[4]

Such was the conclusion of the noted historian Durant regarding Constantine. "Was his conversion sincere—was it an act of religious belief, or a consummate stroke of *political* wisdom? *Probably the latter*...He seldom conformed to the ceremonial requirements of Christian worship. His letters to Christian bishops make it clear that he cared little for the theological differences that agitated Christendom—though he was willing to suppress dissent in the interests of imperial unity. Throughout his reign he treated the bishops as his political aides; he summoned them, presided over their councils, and agreed to enforce whatever opinion their majority should formulate. A real believer would have been a Christian first and a statesman afterward; with Constantine it was the reverse. Christianity was to him a *means,* not an *end.*"[5]

Persecutions had not destroyed the Christian faith. Constantine knew this. Instead of the empire constantly being divided—with pagans in conflict with Christians—why not take such steps as might be necessary to *mix* both paganism and Christianity together, he reasoned, and thus bring a *united* force to the empire? There were *similarities* between the two religious systems. Even the cross symbol was not a divisive factor, for by this time it was in use by Christians, and "to the worshipper of Mithra in Constantine's forces, the cross could give no offense, for they had long fought under

a standard bearing a Mithraic cross of light."[6]

The Christianity of Constantine was a mixture. Though he had his statue removed from pagan temples and renounced the offering of sacrifices to himself, yet people continued to speak of the divinity of the emperor. As pontifex maximus he continued to watch over the heathen worship and protect its rights. In dedicating Constantinople in 330 a ceremonial that was half pagan and half Christian was used. The chariot of the sun-god was set in the market-place and over it the cross of Christ. Coins made by Constantine featured the cross, but also representations of Mars or Apollo. While professing to be a Christian, he continued to believe in pagan magic formulas for the protection of crops and the healing of disease. All of these things are pointed out in *The Catholic Encyclopedia.*[7] Yet, the concept by which the Roman Catholic Church developed and grew—the concept of mixing paganism and Christianity together as a united force—is clearly linked with Constantine and the years that followed in which the church became rich and increased with goods.

A story that greatly influenced cross worship within the Romish church—even more than that of Constantine's vision—centered around his mother Helena. When almost eighty years of age, she made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Legend has it that she found three crosses buried there—one the cross of Christ and the other two the ones upon which the thieves were crucified. The *cross of Christ* was identified because it worked miracles of healing at the suggestion of Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, while the other two did not.

Says an article in *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* "A portion of the True Cross remained at Jerusalem enclosed in a silver reliquary; the remainder, with the nails, must have been sent to Constantine...One of the nails was fastened to the emperor's helmet, and one to his horse's bridle, bringing to pass, according to many of the Fathers, what had been written by Zacharias the Prophet: 'In that day that which is upon the bridle of the horse shall be holy to the Lord'(Zach. 14:20)"![8] This same article, while attempting to hold to the general teachings of the church regarding the cross, admits that the stories about the discovery of the cross vary and the tradition (which actually developed years later) may be largely based on legend.

That Helena did visit Jerusalem in 326 appears to be histor-

ically correct. But the story of her discovery of the cross did not appear until 440—about 114 years later![9] The idea that the original cross would still be at Jerusalem almost 300 years after the crucifixion seems very doubtful. Besides, laws among the Jews required crosses to be burned after being used for crucifixion.[10]

What if someone in our day did find the *actual* cross of Christ and could *prove* it to be such? This would be of great interest, of course; but would there be any virtue in that piece of wood? No, for the cross has already served its purpose as did the brass serpent of Moses. We recall that "Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived" (Numbers 21:9). Lifting up the serpent in the wilderness was a type of the way Christ was lifted up in death (John 3:15). But after the brass serpent had served its intended purpose, the Israelites kept it around and made an *idol* out of it! Thus, centuries later, Hezekiah "did that which was *right* in the sight of the Lord...he removed the high places, and brake the images and cut down the groves, and *brake in pieces the brasen serpent* that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it" (2 Kings 18:1-4). Hezekiah did "right" —not only by destroying *heathen* idols—but even that which *God* had ordained, for it had served its original purpose and was now being used in a superstitious way. On this same basis, if the original cross was still in existence, there would be no reason to set it up as an object of worship. And if there would be no power in the *original* cross, how much less is there in a *mere piece of wood in its shape?*

Even as the pagan Egyptians had set up obelisks, not only as a *symbol* of their god, but in some cases the very *image* was believed to possess supernatural power, even so did some come to regard the cross. Had it not helped Constantine in the Battle of Milvian Bridge? Had not the cross worked miracles for Helena? It came to be regarded as an image that could scare away evil spirits. It was worn as a charm. It was placed at the top of church steeples to frighten away lightning, yet because of its high position, was the very thing that attracted lightning! The use of the cross in private homes was supposed to ward off trouble and disease. Many pieces of wood—supposedly pieces of the "original" cross—were sold and exchanged as protectors and charms.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Relics of Romanism

THE GROSS SUPERSTITION that has accompanied the use of relics reveals the deception and inconsistency with which Romanism has been plagued for centuries. Among the most highly venerated relics have been pieces of the "true cross." So many of these were scattered throughout Europe and other parts of the world that Calvin once said that if all pieces were gathered together, they would form a good *ship-load;* yet the cross of Christ was carried by one *individual!* Are we to believe that these pieces miraculously multiplied as when Jesus blessed the loaves and fishes? Such was apparently the belief of St. Paulinus who spoke of "The redintegration of the Cross, i. e. that it never grew smaller in size, no matter how many pieces were detached from it"![1]

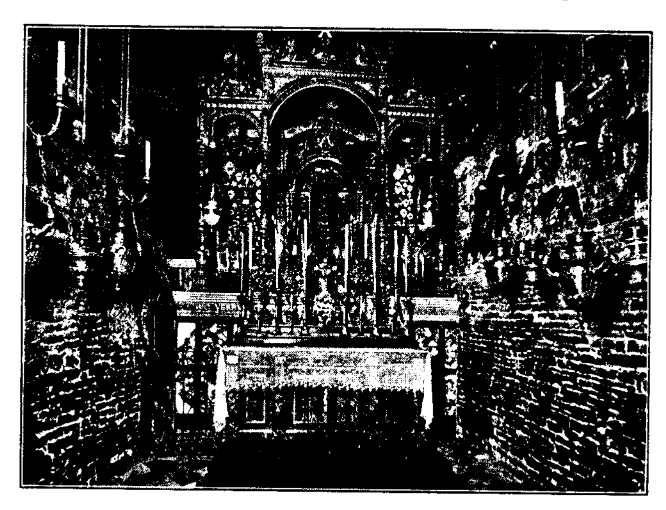
The noted reformer, John Calvin (1509-1564), mentioned the inconsistency of various relics of his day. Several churches claimed to have the crown of thorns; others the water-pots used by Jesus in the miracle of Cana. Some of the wine was to be found at Orleans. Concerning a piece of broiled fish Peter offered Jesus, Calvin said, "It must have been wondrously well salted, if it has kept for such a long series of ages." The crib of Jesus was exhibited for veneration every Christmas eve at St. Mary Major's in Rome. Several churches claimed to have the baby clothes of Jesus. The church of St. James in Rome displayed the altar on which Jesus was placed when he was presented in the temple. Even the foreskin (from his circumcision) was shown by the monks of Charroux, who, as a proof of its genuineness, declared that it yielded drops of blood.[2] Several churches claimed to possess the "holy prepuce", including a church at Coulombs, France, the Church of St. John in Rome, and the Church of Puy in Velay![3]

Other relics include Joseph's carpenter tools, bones of the donkey on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the cup used at the Last Supper, the empty purse of Judas, Pilate's basin,

the coat of purple thrown over Jesus by the mocking soldiers, the sponge lifted to him on the cross, nails from the cross, specimens of the hair of the Virgin Mary (some brown, some blond, some red, and some black), her skirts, wedding ring, slippers, veil, and even a bottle of the milk on which Jesus had been suckled.[4]

According to Catholic belief, Mary's body was taken to heaven. But several different churches in Europe did claim to have the body of Mary's mother, even though we know nothing about her and she was not even given the name "St. Ann" until a few centuries ago! Even more difficult is the story about Mary's *house.* Catholics believe that the house in which Mary lived at *Nazareth* is now in the little town of *Loreto,* Italy, having been transported there *by angels!*

The Catholic Encyclopedia says: "Since the fifteenth century, and possibly even earlier, the 'Holy House' of Loreto has been numbered among the most famous shrines of Italy... The interior measures only thirty-one feet by thirteen. An altar stands at one end beneath a statue, blackened with age, of the Virgin Mother and her Divine Infant...venerable throughout the world on account of the Divine mysteries accomplished in it...It is here that most holy Mary, Mother of God, was born; here that she was saluted by the Angel; here that the eternal Word was made Flesh. Angels conveyed



Interior of 'Holy House' at Loreto

this House from Palestine to the town Tersato in Illyria in the year of salvation 1291 in the pontificate of Nicholas IV. Three years later, in the beginning of the pontificate of Boniface VIII, it was carried again by the ministry of angels and placed in a wood...where having changed its station thrice in the course of a year, at length, by the will of God it took up its permanent position on this spot...That the traditions thus boldly proclaimed to the world have been *fully sanctioned* by the Holy See cannot for a moment remain in doubt. More than *forty-seven* popes have in various ways rendered honor to the shrine, and an *immense number* of Bulls and Briefs proclaim *without qualification* the identity of the Santa Casa di Loreto with the Holy House of Nazareth"![5]

The veneration of dead bodies of martyrs was ordered by the Council of Trent, the Council which also condemned those who did not believe in relics: "The holy *bodies* of holy martyrs...are to be venerated by the faithful, for through these bodies *many benefits* are bestowed by God on men, so that they who affirm that veneration and honor are not due to the relics of the saints...are wholly to be condemned, as the Church has already long since condemned, and also now condemns them."[6] Because it was believed that "many benefits" could come through the bones of dead men, the sale of bodies and bones became big business!

In about 750, long lines of wagons constantly came to Rome bringing immense quantities of skulls and skeletons which were sorted, labeled, and sold by the popes.[7] Graves were plundered by night and tombs in churches were watched by armed men! "Rome", says Gregorovius, "was like a mouldering cemetery in which hyenas howled and fought as they dug greedily after corpses." There is in the Church of St. Prassede a marble slab which states that in 817, Pope Paschal had the bodies of 2,300 martyrs transferred from cemeteries to this church.[8] When Pope Boniface IV converted the Pantheon into a Christian church in about 609, "twenty-eight cartloads of sacred bones were said to have been removed from the Catacombs and placed in a prophyry basin beneath the high altar."[9]

Placing bones beneath a church or other relics were required to "consecrate" the ground and building.[10] The Castle Church at Wittenberg, to the door of which Luther

nailed his famous "Ninety-five Theses", had 19,000 saintly relics![11] Bishops were *forbidden* by the second Nicaean Council in 787 to dedicate a building if no relics were present; the penalty for so doing was excommunication! Were these ideas taken from the Bible or from *paganism?*

In the old legends, when Nimrod the false "savior" of Babylon died, his body was torn limb from limb—part being buried one place, and part another. When he was "resurrected", becoming the sun-god, it was taught that he was now in a different body, the members of the old body being left behind. This is in *contrast* to the death of the true savior, Jesus Christ, of whom it was prophesied, "A bone of him shall not be broken" (John 19:36) and who was resurrected in the *true* sense of the word. The resurrection of Christ resulted in an *empty* tomb, no parts of his body being left behind for relics!

In the old mystery religion, the various places where it was believed a bone of their god was buried were considered sacred—"consecrated" by a bone. "Egypt was covered with sepulchres of its martyred god; and many a leg and arm and skull, all vouched to be genuine, were exhibited in the rival burying places for the adoration of the Egyptian faithful."[12]

The influence of Egypt on the children of Israel is evidenced in their setting up of the golden calf. Since Egypt was a place of multiplied relics, the wisdom of God in the *secret burial* of Moses is apparent (Deut. 34:6). No one knew the place of his burial and no sacred pilgrimages could be made to his tomb. Years later, the brass serpent that Moses made was named "Nehustan" and was worshipped as a sacred relic by the Israelites (2 Kings 18:4). If such idolatry was practiced with something Moses *made,* how much deeper in idolatry would they have gone had they possessed one of his *bones!*

Perhaps needless to say, the use of relics is very ancient and did not originate with Christianity. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* rightly says that the use "of some object, notably part of the body or clothes, remaining as a memorial of a departed saint" was in existence *"before* the propagation of Christianity" and "the veneration of relics, in fact, is to some extent a primitive instinct associated with *many other religious systems* besides that of Christianity."[13] If Christ and the apostles did not use relics, but the use of such was known

prior to Christianity and among other religions, do we not have another example of a *pagan* idea being "Christianized"?

We do not see that relics have any part in true worship, for "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in *truth*" (John 4:24). The extremism to which the use of relics has led, is certainly not "truth." Some of the bones that were at one time acclaimed as the bones of saints have been exposed as the bones of *animals!* In Spain, a cathedral once displayed what was said to be part of a wing of the angel Gabriel when he visited Mary. Upon investigation, however, it was found to be a magnificent ostrich feather![14] It is not necessary to labor long on this point. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* itself recognizes that many relics are doubtful. "Many of the more ancient relics duly exhibited for veneration in the great sanctuaries of Christendom or even at Rome itself must now be pronounced to be either certainly *spurious* or open to grave *suspicion*...difficulties might be urged against the supposed 'column of the flagellation' venerated at Rome in the Church of Santa Prassede and against *many other famous relics"!*[15]

How, then, is this discrepancy explained? *The Catholic Encyclopedia* continues: "...no dishonor is done to God by the continuance of an *error* which has been handed down in perfect good faith for many centuries...Hence there is justification for the practice of the Holy See in allowing the cult of certain doubtful ancient relics to continue."[16] But, again, we would point out that true worship is in spirit and in *truth*—not by the continuance of an *error.* Even if we did have one of Mary's hairs, or a bone of the apostle Paul, or the robe of Jesus, would God be pleased with these things being set up as objects of worship? According to the example of the brass serpent of Moses, he would not. We can only ask: if there would be no real virtue in the *actual* hair, bone, or robe, how much less merit can there be in relics which are known to be *fakes?*

CHAPTER NINE

Religious Fraud

THE SALE OF relics, church offices, and indulgences became big business within the church of the Middle Ages. Pope Boniface VIII declared a jubilee for the year 1300 and offered liberal indulgences to those who would make a pilgrimage to St. Peter's. An estimated 2, 000, 000 people came within that year and deposited such treasure before the supposed tomb of St. Peter that two priests with rakes in their hands were kept busy day and night raking up the money.[1] Much of this was used by the pope to enrich his own relatives—the Gaetani—who bought numerous castles and splendid estates in Latium. This was strongly resented by the people of Rome.

From the days of Constantine, the Roman church had increased in wealth at a rapid pace. In the Middle Ages, the church owned entire cities and large portions of land. Those who lived in Catholic countries were required to pay taxes to the church. This was not *giving* from the heart, but fees paid "of necessity"—a principle which was opposed by the apostle Paul (2 Cor. 9:7). In those days, few people knew how to write, so priests were often involved in drafting wills. In 1170 Pope Alexander III decreed that no one could make a valid will except in the presence of a priest! Any secular notary who drew up a will (except under these circumstances) was to be excommunicated![2] Often a priest was the last person to be with a dying man, for he would give the last rites, the Extreme Unction. With such arrangements, we can be sure the Romish church was well remembered.

Another source of money was the selling of indulgences. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* explains that sins committed *after* baptism (which for a Catholic is usually in infancy!) can be forgiven through the sacrament of penance, "*but* there still remains the *temporal punishment* required by Divine justice, and this requirement must be fulfilled either

in the present life or in the world to come, i.e. in *Purgatory*. An indulgence offers the penitent sinner the means of discharging this debt during this life on earth."[3] Many have only had a general idea of what the word indulgence implies.

Another thing that is not well-known about indulgences is the basis, according to Catholic belief, on which such are granted. According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, the basis or source for indulgences is the "Treasury." This includes the infinite redemptive work of Christ who is the propitiation for sins (1 John 2:2), *"besides"*—notice the word!—"there are the satisfactory *works of the Blessed Virgin Mary* undiminished by any penalty due to sin, and the virtues, penances, and sufferings of the saints vastly exceeding any temporal punishment which these servants of God might have incurred." Because of the works these have performed, there is an extra supply or treasury of merits, merits which make it possible for indulgences to be shared with others of the church who have not been as saintly! Such was the doctrine dogmatically set forth in the Bull "Unigenitus" of Clement VI in 1343. "According to Catholic doctrine, therefore, the source of indulgences is constituted by the merits of Christ *and the saints*."[4]

But if Christ "is *the* propitiation for our sins" and his blood "cleanseth us from *all* sin" (1 John 1:7; 2:2), in what way can the merits of Mary and other saints possibly add to this? What Mary or other saints did can add nothing to the *completed* work of Christ at Calvary. To us, such rigmarole provides no support for the indulgence doctrine, but identifies it, rather, as a man-made fabrication.

Without a proper scriptural foundation, it is little wonder that the idea of indulgences led to many abuses. Because granting indulgences was commonly linked with money, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* makes such statements as: "the practice was fraught with grave danger, and soon became a fruitful source of evil...a means of raising money...indulgences were employed by mercenary ecclesiastics as a means of pecuniary gain...abuses were widespread"![5]

One of the abuses was that some who sold indulgences to sinners were greater sinners themselves. About 1450, Thomas Gascoigne, Chancellor of Oxford University, complained that the indulgence sellers would wander over the land and issue a letter of pardon, sometimes for the payment of two pence,



Woodcut of indulgence sales by Jorg Breu the Elder (16th century).

sometimes for a glass of beer, for the hire of a harlot, or for carnal love.[6]

At the time of Martin Luther, because of construction work on St. Peter's, a special drive was made by the pope to raise money through the granting of indulgences. John Tetzel, known to be a man of poor conduct, but one who had ability as a quack fund raiser, was appointed to sell indulgences in Germany. The following is given as an eyewitness description of Tetzel's entry into a German town. "When the indulgence-seller approached the town, the Bull (the pope's official document) was carried before him on a cloth of velvet and gold, and all the priests and monks, the town council, the schoolmasters and their scholars, and all the men and women went out to meet him with banners and candles and songs, forming a great procession; then with bells ringing and organs playing, they accompanied him to the principal church; a cross was set up in the midst of the church and the pope's banner displayed; in short, one might think they were receiving God himself. In front of the cross was placed a

large iron chest to receive the money, and then the people were induced in various ways to buy indulgences."

It is said that Tetzel carried with him a picture of the devil tormenting souls in purgatory and frequently repeated the words that appeared on the money box: *Sobald der pfenning im kasten klingt, kie seel' aus dem Fegfeuer springt,* which freely translated means, "As soon as the money in the casket rings, the troubled soul from Purgatory springs." The rich gave large donations, while poverty stricken peasants sacrificed what they could in order to help their loved ones in Purgatory or to obtain pardon for their own sins.

In Medieval universities, those who wished to advocate certain opinions would publicly post "theses"—statements of their ideas—and invite discussion on these points. Following this custom, Martin Luther nailed his famous Ninety-five Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. (His twenty-seventh point was against the idea that as soon as money went into the collection box that souls would escape from Purgatory.) It was not at the Castle Church, however, that Tetzel preached. Indulgence preaching was not allowed in Wittenberg. But many of the people from Wittenberg had gone to hear Tetzel speak at Juterbog, a nearby town.



Luther began to speak out against the selling of indulgences and, eventually, against indulgences as such. He was denounced in a Bull of Pope Leo X for saying, "Indulgences are pious frauds...Indulgences do not avail those who really gain them for the remission of the penalty due to actual sin in the sight of God's justice."

The work of the Reformation did a good job in exposing the abuses of giving money in behalf of souls in Purgatory. Today people are not told that money can pay for the release of these tormented souls. Nevertheless, the giving of money and prayers for the dead go hand in hand. Since priests must admit they have no way to know when souls actually pass out of Purgatory into Heaven, there is never

really a settled peace in the matter. There is always the possibility that more money should be given on behalf of loved ones who have died. To play upon the love and tender memories of bereaved people, to take money for masses and long prayers, brings to mind those Jewish priests at the time of Jesus who would "*devour* widows' houses, and for a pretence make *long prayer*" (Matt. 23:14).

High Mass can be very expensive, depending on the flowers, candles, and number of priests taking part. It is sung in a loud tone of voice. The low Mass, on the other hand, is much less expensive—only six candles are used and it is repeated in a low voice. The Irish have a saying, "High money, HIGH Mass; low money, LOW Mass; no money, NO MASS!"

Those who die without anyone to pay for Masses in their behalf are called the "forgotten souls in Purgatory." However, these are remembered in special prayers on November 2, "All Soul's Day." If a Catholic fears he might become one of the "forgotten souls", he may join the Purgatorian Society which was established in 1856. A contribution each year to the society will assure him that, upon his death, prayers will be said for his soul. During World War II, the Archbishop of Winnipeg, in a letter dated March 1, 1944, urged Roman Catholic mothers to *guarantee* the salvation of their sons from Purgatory by the payment to him of $40 for prayers and masses in their behalf.

I will say it here quite clearly, whether he be Pagan, Papal, Protestant, or Pentecostal, no pope, priest, or preacher can guarantee the salvation of anyone, living or dead, on the basis of *any amount of money* given for his prayers. The Bible says it is *hard* for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19:23, 24). But if the payment of money could help a person escape from Purgatory and go to Heaven, just the *reverse* would be true. Instead of it being "hard" for a rich man to enter heaven, riches would be a "help."

The Bible says, "They that trust in their *wealth,* and boast themselves in the multitude of riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psalms 49:6,7). If money cannot redeem a brother who is alive, how could it redeem him if he is dead? There can be no mistake as to where *Peter* stood on the matter. He plainly says we are "NOT redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as

of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18, 19). When the former Samaria sorcerer offered money to obtain a gift of God, Peter said, "To hell with you and your money! How dare you think you could buy the gift of God?" (Acts 8:20). These words are from the translation by J. B. Phillips to which he adds a footnote: "These are exactly what the Greek means. It is a pity that their real meaning is obscured by modern slang."

Roman Catholic ideas about Purgatory (and prayers to help those in Purgatory) were not the teachings of Christ and the apostles. Such were not taught within the Romish church to any great degree until around 600 when Pope Gregory the Great made claims about a *third* state—a place for the purification of souls before their entrance into heaven—and did not become an actual *dogma* until the Council of Florence in 1459.

During the twelfth century, a legend was spread which claimed that St. Patrick had found the actual entrance to Purgatory. In order to convince some doubters, he had a very



Old German drawing typical of the art and ideas of the Middle Ages. Mary is shown being crowned Queen of Heaven. Below are angels and demons near the mouth of Purgatory.

deep pit dug in Ireland, into which several monks descended. Upon their return, said the tale, they described Purgatory and Hell with discouraging vividness. In 1153, the Irish knight Owen claimed he had also gone down through the pit into the underworld. Tourists came from far and near to visit the spot. Then financial abuses developed and in 1497 Pope Alexander VI ordered it closed as a *fraud.*[7] Three years later, however, Pope Benedict XIV preached and published at Rome a sermon *in favor* of Patrick's Purgatory.[8]

Beliefs about a purgatory have been around a long time. Plato who lived from 427 to 347 B. C. spoke of the Orphic teachers of his day "who flock to the rich man's doors, and try to persuade him that they have a power at their command, which they procure from heaven, and which enables them by sacrifices and incantation...to make amends for any crime committed by the individual himself, or his ancestors...Their mysteries deliver us from the torments of the other world, while the neglect of them is punished by an awful doom."[9]



Chinese Buddhists buying indulgences.

There is an elaborate description of purgatorial suffering in the sacred writings of Buddhism. There have been times when so many of the Chinese Buddhists came to buy prayers for the deliverance of their loved ones from purgatory that special shops were set up for this purpose. (Above illustration.) In the religion of Zoroaster, souls are taken through twelve stages before they are sufficiently purified to enter heaven. The Stoics conceived of a middle place of enlightenment which they called Empurosis, that is, "a place of fire."[10] According to Moslem doctrine, the angels Munnker and Nekier question those who die as to their religion and prophet.

Many of these go into purgatory, but through money given to a priest an escape may be provided.

The concept of giving money on behalf of the dead is very ancient, a point which may be seen within the Bible itself. Apparently the Israelites were exposed to this belief, for they were warned not to give money "for the *dead*" (Deut. 26: 14). After presenting detailed evidence for his conclusion, Hislop says: "In every system, therefore, *except that of the Bible,* the doctrine of purgatory after death, and prayers for the dead, has always been found to occupy a place."[11]



Baby offered to Molech.

It is very possible that concepts about purgatory and certain ideas linked with *Molech* worship all stemmed from the same source. It appears that various nations had the idea that *fire,* in one way or another, was necessary to cleanse from sin. The Israelites were repeatedly forbidden to let their seed "pass through the fire to Molech" (Lev. 18:21, Jer. 32:35, 2 Kings 23:10). Molech (who some identify with Bel or Nimrod) was worshipped "with human sacrifices, purifications... with mutilation, vows of celibacy and virginity, and devotion of the firstborn."[12] Sometimes he was represented as a horrible idol with fire burning inside so that what was placed in his arms was consumed. In the above illustration, a heathen priest has taken a baby from its mother to be offered to Molech. Lest the parents should relent, a loud noise was made on drums to hide the screams. The word for drums is

tophim from which comes the word "Tophet,"[13] the place mentioned in verses such as Jeremiah 7:31: "They have built the high place of Tophet...to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire." While drums sounded, bands played, and priests chanted, human sacrifices were devoured in the flames.

How pitiful to think that by such cruel rites, or by the payment of money, men think they can pay for their sins. The good news is that the price has already been paid—by Jesus Christ! Salvation is by grace—by favor that could never be merited by money, human works, or sacrifices. "For by GRACE are ye saved through *faith*; and that not of yourselves: it is the GIFT of God: not of *works*, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).

CHAPTER TEN

Was Peter the First Pope?

STANDING AT THE head of the Roman Catholic church is the pope of Rome. This man—according to Catholic doctrine—is the earthly *head* of the church and *successor* of the apostle Peter. According to this belief, Christ appointed Peter as the first pope, who in turn went to Rome and served in this capacity for twenty-five years. Beginning with Peter, the Catholic church claims a succession of popes which has continued to this day. This is a very important part of Roman Catholic doctrine. But do the scriptures teach that Christ ordained ONE man to be above all others in his church? Can we find any scriptural authority for the office of a pope, a supreme pontiff? Did the early Christians recognize Peter as such?

To the contrary, the scriptures clearly show there was to be an *equality* among the members of the church and that CHRIST "is the *head* of the church" (Eph.5:23), *not the pope!*

James and John once came to Jesus asking if one of them might sit on his right hand and the other on his left in the kingdom. (In Eastern kingdoms, the two principal ministers of state, ranking next in authority to the king, hold these positions.) If the Roman Catholic claim is true, it seems that Jesus would have explained that he had given the place on his right to Peter and did not intend to create any position on the left! But to the contrary, here was the answer of Jesus: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise dominion upon them, but it shall *not* be so among you" (Mk. 10:35-43).

In this statement, Jesus plainly said that none of them was to be a ruler over the others. Instead, he taught an equality—clearly denying the principles that are involved in having a

pope ruling over the church as the Bishop of bishops!

Jesus further taught the concept of equality by warning the disciples against using flattering titles such as "father" (the word "pope" means father), Rabbi, or Master. "*For* one is your Master, even Christ", he said, "and all ye are brethren" (Matt. 23:4-10). The idea that one of them was to be exalted to the position of pope is at utter variance with this passage.

But Roman Catholics are taught that Peter was given such a superior position that the entire church was built upon him! The verse that is used to support this claim is Matthew 16: 18: "And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

If we take this verse in its setting, however, we can see that the church was not built on Peter, but on CHRIST. In the verses just before, Jesus asked the disciples who men were saying that he was. Some said he was John the Baptist, some Elijah; others thought he was Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Then Jesus asked: "But whom say ye that I am?" To this, Peter replied: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then it was that Jesus said, "Thou art Peter (*petros*—a stone, a rock), and upon this rock (*petra*—a mass of rock—the great foundation rock of *truth* that Peter had just expressed) I will build my church." The rock upon which the true church was to be built was connected with Peter's *statement* —"Thou art the Christ"—and so the true foundation upon which the church was built was Christ himself, not Peter.

Peter himself declared that Christ was the foundation *rock* (1 Peter 2:4-8). He spoke of Christ as "the *stone* which was set at naught of you builders...neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4:11, 12). The church was built on Christ. He is the true foundation and there is no other foundation: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is *Jesus Christ*" (1 Cor.3:11).

When Jesus spoke of building his church upon a rock, the disciples did not take this to mean he was exalting Peter to be their pope, for two chapters later they asked Jesus a question about who was the GREATEST (Matt. 18:1). If Jesus had taught that Peter was the one upon whom the church was to be built—if this verse proved that Peter was to be the pope—the disciples would have automatically known who was the greatest among them!

Actually, it was not until the time of Calixtus, who was

bishop of Rome from 218 to 223, that Matthew 16:18 was used in an attempt to prove the church was built on Peter and that the bishop of Rome was his successor.

If we take a close look at Peter in the Scriptures, it becomes apparent that Peter was not a pope at all!

1. Peter was *married.* The fact that Peter was a married man does not harmonize with the Catholic position that a pope is to be unmarried. The Scriptures tell us that *Peter's wife's mother* was healed of a fever (Matt. 8:14). Of course there couldn't be a "Peter's wife's mother" if Peter didn't have a wife! Even years later Paul made a statement which shows that the apostles had wives—including Cephas (1 Cor. 9:5). Cephas was Peter's Aramaic name(John 1:42).

2. Peter would not allow men to *bow down* to him. When Peter came into his house, "Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself am a man" (Acts 10:25, 26). This was quite different from what a pope might have said, for men do bow before the pope.

3. Peter did not place *tradition* on a level with the word of God. To the contrary, Peter had little faith in "traditions from your fathers" (1 Peter 1:18). His sermon on the day of Pentecost was filled with the Word, not traditions of men. When the people asked what they should do to get right with God, Peter did not tell them to have a little water poured or sprinkled on them. Instead, he said: "Repent and be *baptized* everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

4. Peter was not a pope, for he wore no *crown.* Peter himself explained that when the chief shepherd shall appear, *then* shall we "receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5:4). Since Christ has not yet appeared again, the crown that the pope wears is not one bestowed upon him by Christ. In short, Peter never acted like a pope, never dressed like a pope, never spoke like a pope, never wrote like a pope, and people did not approach him as a pope!

In all probability, in the very early days of the church, Peter *did* take the most prominent position among the apostles. It was Peter who preached the first sermon after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and 3,000 were added to the Lord. Later, it was Peter who first took the gospel to the Gentiles. Whenever we find a list of the twelve apostles in the Bible, Peter's name is always mentioned *first* (Matt. 10:2; Mk. 3:16; Lk. 6:14; Acts 1:13). But none of this—not by any stretch of the imagination—would indicate that Peter was the pope or universal Bishop of bishops!

While Peter apparently did take the most outstanding role of the apostles at the very beginning, later, PAUL seems to have had the most outstanding ministry. As a writer of the New Testament, for example, Paul wrote 100 chapters with 2,325 verses, while Peter only wrote 8 chapters with 166 verses.

Paul spoke of Peter, James, and John as pillars in the Christian church (Gal. 2:9). Nevertheless, he could say, "In NOTHING am I behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. 12:11). But if Peter had been the supreme pontiff, the pope, then certainly Paul would have been somewhat behind him. In Galatians 2:11, we read that Paul gave a rebuke to Peter "because he was to be *blamed*", wording which seems strange if Peter was regarded as an "infallible" pope!

Paul was called "*the* apostle of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:13), whereas Peter's ministry was primarily to the Jews (Gal. 2:7-9). This fact—in itself—would seem sufficient to show Peter was not bishop of ROME, for Rome was a Gentile city (cf. Acts 18:2). All of this is indeed highly significant when we consider that the entire framework of Roman Catholicism is based on the claim that Peter was Rome's first bishop!

There is no proof, Biblically speaking, that Peter ever went near Rome! The New Testament tells us he went to Antioch, Samaria, Joppa, Caesarea, and other places, but not Rome! This is a strange omission, especially since Rome was considered the most important city in the world!

The Catholic Encyclopedia (article, "Peter") points out that a tradition appeared as early as the third century for the belief that Peter was bishop of Rome for twenty-five years —these years being (as Jerome believed) from 42 A. D. until

67 A. D. But this viewpoint is not without distinct problems. About the year 44, Peter was in the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15). About 53, Paul joined him in Antioch (Gal 2:11). About 58, Paul wrote his letter to the Christians at Rome in which he sent greetings to twenty-seven persons, but *never mentioned Peter.* Imagine a missionary writing to a church, greeting twenty-seven of the members by name, but never mentioning the pastor!

The accompanying photograph shows a statue, supposedly of Peter, that is located in St. Peter's at Rome. I have witnessed long lines of people waiting to pass before it and kiss its foot.



Vatican statue of Peter

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Pagan Origin of Papal Office

NIMROD, THE KING and founder of Babylon, was not only its political leader, he was its *religious* leader also. He was a priest-king. From Nimrod descended a line of priest-kings—each standing at the *head* of the occult Babylonian mystery religion. This line continued on down to the days of Belshazzar of whom we read in the Bible. Many are familiar with the feast he held in Babylon when the mysterious handwriting appeared on the wall. Some have failed to recognize, however, that this gathering was more than a mere social party! It was a *religious* gathering, a celebration of the Babylonian mysteries of which Belshazzar was the head at that time. "They drank wine, and *praised the gods* of gold, and of silver, and of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone" (Dan. 5:4). Adding to the blasphemy of the occasion, they drank their wine from the holy vessels of the Lord which had been taken from the Jerusalem temple. This attempt to *mix* that which was holy with that which was heathenism brought about Divine judgment. Babylon was marked for doom.

The ancient city is now in ruins, uninhabited, desolate (Jer. 50:39; 51:62). There is a railroad which runs from Baghdad to Basra which passes close by. A sign written in English and Arabic says: "Babylon Halt, Trains stop here to pick up passengers." The only passengers, however, are tourists who come to inspect the ruins. But though the city was destroyed, concepts that were a part of the old Babylon religion survived!

When Rome conquered the world, the paganism that had spread from Babylon and developed in various nations, was merged into the religious system of Rome. This included the

idea of a Supreme Pontiff (Pontifex Maximus). Thus Babylonian paganism, which had originally been carried out under the rulership of Nimrod, was united under the rulership of one man at Rome: Julius Caesar. It was the year 63 B. C. that Julius Caesar was officially recognized as the "Pontifex Maximus" of the mystery religion—now established at Rome.

To illustrate how this title was used by the Caesars, we show here an old Roman coin of Augustus Caesar (B. C. 27-14 A. D.) with his title as the "Pont-Max", the head of the mysteries. It is interesting to note that coins such as this were in circulation during the days of our Lord's earthly ministry. "And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's" (Matt. 22:17-22).



The Roman emperors (including Constantine) continued to hold the office of Pontifex Maximus until 376 when Gratian, for Christian reasons, refused it. He recognized this title and office as idolatrous and blasphemous. By this time, however, the *bishop of Rome* had arisen to political power and prestige. Consequently, in 378, Demasus, bishop of Rome, was elected the Pontifex Maximus—the official high priest of the mysteries! Since Rome was considered the most important city in the world, some of the Christians looked to the bishop of Rome as "bishop of bishops" and head of the church. This produced a unique situation. One man was now looked to as *head* by both Christians and pagans. By this time, and through the years that followed, the streams of paganism and Christianity flowed together, producing what is known as the Roman Catholic Church, under the headship of the Pontifex Maximus, the Pope.

The title Pontifex Maximus is repeatedly found on inscriptions throughout the Vatican—above the entry of St. Peter's, above the statue of Peter, in the dome, above the Holy Year Door which is opened only during a jubilee year, etc. The accompanying medal, struck by



Pope Leo X just before the Reformation, illustrates one of the ways that the title "Pont. Max." has been used by the popes.

But how could a man be at one and the same time both the head of the church and the Pontifex Maximus, the head of the pagan mysteries? In an attempt to cover this discrepancy, church leaders sought for similarities between the two religions. They knew that if they could find even a few points that each side had in common, both could be merged into *one,* for by this time most were not concerned about details. They desired numbers and political power. Truth was secondary.

One striking similarity was that the Supreme Pontiff of paganism bore the Chaldean title *peter* or interpreter—the interpreter of the mysteries.[1] Here was an opportunity to "Christianize" the pagan office of Pontifex Maximus, the office the bishop of Rome now held, by associating the "Peter" or Grand Interpreter of Rome with Peter the apostle. But to make the *apostle* Peter the Peter-Roma was not without its problems. To do so, it was necessary to teach that Peter had been in Rome. This is the real reason that since the *fourth century* (and not before) that numerous tales began to be voiced about Peter being the first bishop of Rome.[2] "And so, to the blinded Christians of the apostasy, the Pope was the representative of Peter the apostle, while to the initiated pagans, he was only the representative of Peter, the interpreter of their well-known mysteries."[3]

According to an old tradition, Nimrod was *"the opener"* of secrets or mysteries, "the firstborn" of deified human beings. The word translated "openeth" in verses such as Exodus 13:2, as *Strong's Concordance* points out, is the Hebrew word "peter."[4] To what extent things such as this may have influenced traditions that have been handed down about Peter and Rome, we cannot say.

Since the apostle Peter was known as *Simon* Peter, it is interesting to note that Rome not only had a "Peter", an opener or interpreter of the mysteries, but also a religious leader named Simon who went there in the first century! In fact, it was the Simon who had practiced sorcery in Samaria (Acts 8:9) that later went to Rome and founded a counterfeit Christian religion there! Because this sounds so bizarre, in order to make it clear there is no bias on our part, we

quote the following right from *The Catholic Encyclopedia* about this Simon: "Justin Martyr and other early writers inform us that he afterwards went to *Rome,* worked miracles there by the power of demons, and received *Divine honors* both in Rome and in his own country. Though much extravagant legend afterwards gathered around the name of this Simon...It seems nevertheless probable that there must be some foundation in fact for the account given by Justin and accepted by Eusebius. The historical Simon Magus *no doubt* founded some sort of religion as a counterfeit of *Christianity* in which he claimed to play a part *analogous to that of Christ.*"[5]

We know that the Romish church became expert in taking various ideas or traditions and mixing them together into its one united system of religion. If Simon did build up a following in Rome, if he received Divine honors, if he founded a counterfeit Christian religion in which he played a part analogous to Christ, is it not possible that such ideas could have influenced later traditions? Perhaps this "Simon" being in Rome was later confused with Simon Peter. The popes have claimed to be "Christ in office" on earth. Apparently Simon the sorcerer made the same claim in Rome, but we never read of any such claim being made by Simon Peter the apostle!

Another mixture at Rome involved "keys." For almost a thousand years, the people of Rome had believed in the mystic keys of the pagan god Janus and the goddess Cybele.[6] In Mithraism, one of the main branches of the mysteries that came to Rome, the sun-god carried two keys.[7] When the emperor claimed to be sucessor of the "gods" and the Supreme Pontiff of the mysteries, the keys came to be symbols of his authority. Later when the bishop of Rome became the Pontifex Maximus in about 378, he automatically became the possessor of the mystic keys. This gained recognition for the pope from the pagans and, again, there was the opportunity to mix Peter into the story. Had not Christ said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:19)? It was not until 431, however, that the pope publically claimed that the keys he possessed were the keys of authority given to the apostle Peter. This was over fifty years after the pope had become the Pontifex Maximus, the possessor of the keys. For an example of how the keys

are shown as symbols of the pope's authority, see the large fan on page 89.



Janus with key and cock

The key given to Peter (and to all the other disciples) represented the *message* of the gospel whereby people could enter the kingdom of God. Because some have not rightly understood this, it is not uncommom for Peter to be pictured as the gatekeeper of heaven, deciding who he will let in and who he won't! This is very much like the ideas that were associated with the pagan god *Janus,* for he was the keeper of the doors and gates in the pagan mythology of Rome, the opener. Janus, with key in hand, is shown in the above drawing. He was represented with two faces—one young, the other old (a later version of Nimrod incarnated in Tammuz). It is interesting to notice that not only was the key a symbol of Janus, the *cock* was also regarded as being sacred to him.[8] There was no problem to link the cock with Peter, for had not a cock crowed on the night that he denied the Lord? (John 18:27).

It is certain that the title "Supreme Pontiff" or "Pontifex Maximus" which the pope bears is not a Christian designation, for it was the title used by Roman emperors before the Christian Era. The word "pontiff" comes from the word *pons,* "bridge", and *facio,* "make." It means "bridge-maker." The priest-king emperors of pagan days were regarded as the makers and guardians of the bridges of Rome. Each of them served as high priest and claimed to be the bridge or connecting link between this life and the next.

That branch of the mysteries known as Mithraism grew in Rome until it became—at one time—almost the only faith of the empire.[9] The head priest was called the *Pater Patrum,* that is, the Father of the Fathers.[10] Borrowing directly from this title, at the head of the Roman Catholic Church, is the Papa or Pope—the Father of Fathers. The "Father" of Mithraism had his seat at Rome then, and the "Father" of Catholicism has his there now.

The expensive and highly decorated garments that the

popes wear were not adopted from Christianity, but were patterned after those of the Roman emperors. The historians have not let this fact go unnoticed, for indeed their testimony is that "the vestments of the clergy...were legacies from *pagan* Rome."[11] The *tiara* crown that the popes wear—though decorated in different ways at different times—is identical in *shape* to that worn by the "gods" or angels that are shown on ancient pagan Assyrian tablets.[12] It is similar to that seen on Dagon, the fish-god. (cf. the tiara pictured on page 94).



Dagon

Dagon was actually but a mystery form of the false Babylonian "savior." The name Dagon comes from *dag* (a word commonly translated "fish" in the Bible) and means fish-god.[13] Though it originated in the paganism of Babylon,[14] Dagon worship became especially popular among the heathenistic Philistines (Judges 16:21-30; 1 Sam. 5:5, 6).



Dagon in Mesopotamian sculpture.

The way that Dagon was depicted on Mesopotamian sculpture is seen in the drawing above (second figure from left).[15] Layard, in *Babylon and Nineveh,* explains that "the head of the fish formed a *mitre* above that of the man, while its scaly, fan-like tail fell as a cloak behind, leaving the human limbs and feet exposed."[16] Later, in the development of things, just the *top portion* remained as a mitre, with the jaws of the fish slightly opened. On several pagan Maltese coins, a

god (whose characteristics are the same as those of Osiris, the Egyptian Nimrod), is shown with the fish body removed, and only the fish-head mitre remaining.[17]





A famous painting by Moretto shows St. Ambrose wearing a mitre shaped like the head of a fish. This same type of mitre is worn by the pope as seen in the sketch of Pope Paul VI as he delivered a sermon on "Peace" during his historic visit to the United States in 1965. The picture on page 89 also shows the fish-head mitre.



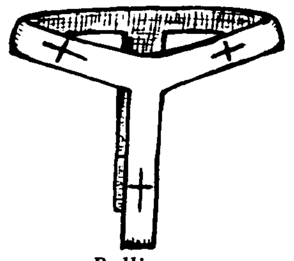
St. Ambrose, by Moretto (sixteenth century).

H. A. Ironside says that the pope is "the direct successor of the high priest of the Babylonian mysteries and the servant of the fish-god Dagon, for whom he wears, like his idolatrous predecessors, the fisherman's *ring*." Again, in mixing paganism and Christianity together, similarities made the mixture less obvious. In this case, since Peter had been a fisherman, the fish-god ring with the title Pontifex Maximus inscribed on it was associated with him. But a ring like this was never worn by Peter the Apostle. No one ever bowed and kissed *his* ring. He probably didn't even



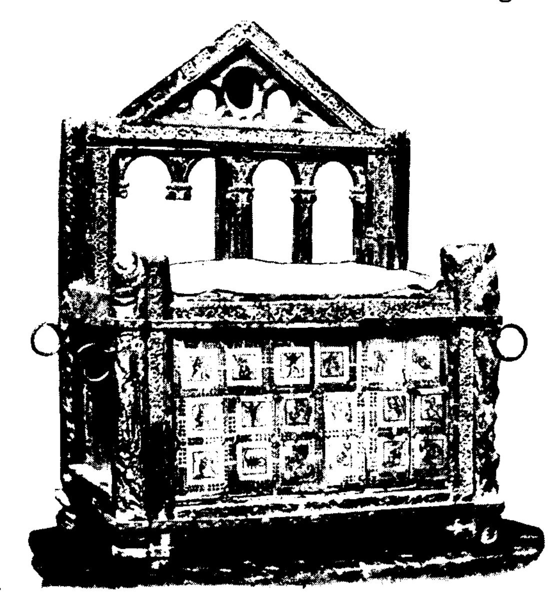
Pope Paul VI wearing mitre.

have one—for silver and gold had he none! (Acts 3).


Pallium.

Another clue to help us solve the mystery of Babylon modern may be seen in the use of the *pallium* which the pope wears over his shoulders. The unabridged dictionaries define it as a garment that was worn by the *pagan* clergy of Greece and Rome, *before* the Christian Era. In modern times, the pallium is made of white wool which is taken from two lambs which have been "blessed" in the basilica of St. Agnes, Rome. As a symbol that the archbishops also share in the plenitude of the papal office, the pope sends the pallium to them. Before it is sent, however, it is laid all night on the supposed tomb of St. Peter—such a practice being a copy of paganism that was practiced among the Greeks!

For centuries the Romish church claimed to posses the very chair in which Peter had sat and ministered at Rome. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* explains that the plates on the front of this chair show fabulous animals of mythology as well as the fabled "labors of *Hercules*."[18] In another volume of *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* we find these words: "Gilga-


Chair of St. Peter.

mesh, whom mythology transformed into a Babylonian Hercules...would then be the person designated by the Biblical Nemrod (Nimrod)."[19] It is curious that Nimrod is likened to Hercules and carvings associated with Hercules appear on the so-called "Chair of Peter." None of these things would cause us to think of this chair as being of Christian origin.

A scientific commission appointed by Pope Paul in July, 1968, has now reported that no part of the chair is old enough to date from the days of Peter. In the official report on the carbon dating and other tests, it has been determined that the chair is no older than the ninth century. Clearly, the old ideas about Peter's chair were interesting, but not accurate.



Pope John XXIII prepares to kiss foot of Peter

Near the high altar of St. Peter's (see page 43) is a large bronze statue supposedly of Peter. This statue is looked upon with the most profound veneration and its foot has been *kissed* so many times that the toes are nearly worn away! The photograph on the previous page shows a former pope (John XXIII) about to kiss this statue which was dressed up with rich papal robes and a three-tiered papal crown for the occasion.

The practice of kissing an idol or statue was borrowed from paganism. As we have seen, Baal worship was linked with the ancient worship of Nimrod in deified form (as the sun-god). In the days of Elijah, multitudes had bowed to Baal and *kissed* him. "Yet", God said, "I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not *bowed* unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not *kissed* him" (1 Kings 19:18). In one of his "mystery" forms, Nimrod (incarnated in the young Tammuz) was represented as a calf. Statues of calves were made, worshipped, and kissed! "They sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say to them, Let the men that sacrifice *kiss* the calves" (Hosea 13:1-3). Kissing an idol was a part of Baal worship!

Not only was the practice of *kissing* an idol adopted by the Romish church, so was the custom of religious processions in which idols are *carried.* Such processions are a common part of Roman Catholic practice, yet these did not originate with Christianity. In the fifteenth century B. C., an image of the Babylonian goddess Ishtar was carried with great pomp and ceremony from Babylon to Egypt.[20] Idol processions were practiced in Greece, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mexico, and many other countries in olden times.

The Bible shows the folly of those who think good can come from idols—idols so powerless they must be *carried!* Isaiah, in direct reference to the gods of Babylon, had this to say: "They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they *fall down,* yea, they *worship.* They bear him upon the *shoulder,* they *carry* him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove" (Isaiah 46:6, 7).

Not only have such processions continued in the Roman Catholic Church in which idols are carried, but the *pope* is



Pope Paul VI carried in procession.

also carried in procession. In Isaiah's time the people lavished silver and gold on their god. Today expensive garments and jewels are placed on the pope. When the pagan god was carried in procession, the people fell down and worshipped, so on certain occasions do people bow before the pope as he is carried by. Even as the god was carried "upon the shoulders", so do men carry the pope, the god of Catholicism, upon their shoulders in religious processions!

Over three thousand years ago, the very *same* practice was known in Egypt, such processions being a part of the paganism there. The illustration on the next page shows the ancient priest-king of Egypt being carried through worshipful crowds by twelve men.[21] A comparison of the papal procession of today, and the ancient pagan procession of Egypt, shows that the one is a *copy* of the other!



Egyptian priest-king carried in procession.

In the drawing of the Egyptian priest-king, we notice the use of the *fabellum*, a large fan made of feathers. This was later known as the mystic fan of Bacchus. And even as this fan was carried in procession with the pagan priest-king, so also are these fans carried with the pope on state occasions. (cf. the drawing with photo.) As *The Encyclopedia Britannica* says, "When going to solemn ceremonies, (the pope) is carried on the sedia, a portable chair of red velvet with a high back, and escorted by two *fabelli* of feathers."[22] That these processional fans originated in the paganism of Egypt is known and admitted even by Catholic writers.[23] The four strong iron rings in the legs of the "Chair of Peter" (page 86) were intended for carrying-poles. But we can be certain that the apostle Peter was never carried through crowds of people bowing to him! (cf. Acts 10:25, 26).

That the papal office was produced by a mixture of paganism and Christianity there can be little doubt. The pallium, the fish-head mitre, the Babylonish garments, the mystic keys, and the title Pontifex Maximus were all borrowed from paganism. All of these things, and the fact that Christ never instituted the office of pope in his church, plainly show that the pope is not the vicar of Christ or the successor of the apostle Peter.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Papal Immorality

IN ADDITION TO the conclusive evidence that has been given, the very character and morals of many of the popes would tend to identify them as sucessors of pagan priests, rather than representatives of Christ or Peter. Some of the popes were so depraved and base in their actions, even people who professed no religion at all were ashamed of them. Such sins as adultery, sodomy, simony, rape, murder, and drunkenness are among the sins that have been committed by popes. To link such sins with men who have claimed to be the "Holy Father", "The Vicar of Christ", and Bishop of bishops", may sound shocking, but those acquainted with the history of the papacy well know that not all popes were holy men.



Pope Sergius III.

Pope Sergius III (904-911) obtained the papal office by murder. The annals of the church of Rome tell about his life of open sin with Marozia who bore him several illegitimate children.[1] He was described by Baronius as a "monster" and by Gregorovius as a "terrorizing criminal." Says a historian: "For seven years this man...occupied the chair of St. Peter, while his concubine and her Semiramis-like mother held court with a pomp and voluptousness that recalled the worse days of the ancient empire."[2]

This woman—Theodora—likened to Semiramis (because of her corrupt morals), along with Marozia, the pope's concubine, "filled the papal chair with their paramours and bastard sons, and turned the papal palace into a den of rob-

bers."[3] The reign of Pope Sergius III began the period known as "the rule of the harlots" (904-963).

Pope John X (914-928) originally had been sent to Ravanna as an archbishop, but Theodora had him returned to Rome and appointed to the papal office. According to Bishop Liutprand of Cremona who wrote a history about fifty years after this time, "Theodora supported John's election in order to cover more easily her illicit relations with him."[4] His reign came to a sudden end when Marozia smothered him to death! She wanted him out of the way so Leo VI (928-929) could become pope. His reign was a short one, however, for he was assassinated by Marozia when she learned he had "given his heart to a more degraded woman than herself"![5] Not long after this, the teenage son of Marozia—under the name of John XI—became pope. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says, "Some, taking Liutprand and the 'Liber Pontificalis' as their authority, assert that he was the natural son of Sergius III (a former pope). Through the intrigues of his mother, who ruled at that time in Rome, he was raised to the Chair of Peter."[6] But in quarreling with some of his mother's enemies, he was beaten and put into jail where he died from poisoning.

In 955 the grandson of Marozia at eighteen years of age became pope under the name of John XII. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* describes him as "a coarse, immoral man, whose life was such that the Lateran was spoken of as a brothel, and the moral corruption in Rome became the subject of general odium... On 6 November a synod composed of fifty Italian and German bishops was convened in St. Peter's; John was accused of sacrilege, simony, perjury, murder, adultery, and incest, and was summoned in writing to defend himself. Refusing to recognize the synod, John pronounced sentence of excommunication against all participators in the assembly, should they elect in his stead another pope...John XII took bloody vengeance on the


Pope John XII.

leaders of the opposite party, Cardinal-Deacon John had his right hand struck off, Bishop Otgar of Speyer was scourged, a high palatine official lost nose and ears...John died on 14 May, 964, eight days after he had been, according to rumor, stricken by paralysis in the act of adultery."[7] The noted Catholic Bishop of Cremona, Luitprand, who lived at this time wrote: "No honest lady dared to show herself in public, for Pope John had no respect either for single girls, married women, or widows—they were sure to be defiled by him, even on the tombs of the holy apostles, Peter and Paul." The Catholic collection of the lives of popes, the "Liber Pontificalis," said: "He spent his entire life in adultery."[8]

Pope Boniface VII (984-985) maintained his position through a lavish distribution of stolen money. The Bishop of Orleans referred to him (and also John XII and Leo VIII) as "monsters of guilt, reeking in blood and filth" and as "antichrist sitting in the temple of God." *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says he "overpowered John XIV (April, 984), thrust him into the dungeons of Sant'Angelo, where the wretched man died four months later...For more than a year Rome endured this *monster* steeped in the blood of his predecessors. But the vengeance was terrible. After his sudden death in July, 985, due in all probability to violence, the body of Boniface was exposed to the insults of the populace, dragged through the streets of the city, and finally, naked and covered with wounds, flung under the statue of Marcus Aurelius...The following morning compassionate clerics removed the corpse and gave it a Christian burial."[9]

Next came Pope John XV (985-996) who split the church's finances among his relatives and earned for himself the reputation of being "covetous of filthy lucre and corrupt in all his acts."

Benedict VIII (1012-1024) "bought the office of pope with open bribery." The following pope, John XIX also bought the papacy. Being a layman, it was necessary for him to be passed through all the clerical orders in one day! After this, Benedict IX (1033-1045) was made pope as a youth 12 years old (or some accounts say 20) through a money bargain with the powerful families that ruled Rome! He "committed murders and adulteries in broad daylight, robbed pilgrims on the graves of the martyrs, a hideous criminal, the people drove him out of Rome.[10] *The Catholic*

Encyclopedia says, "He was a *disgrace* to the Chair of Peter."

"Simony"—the buying and selling of the papal office—became so common, and corruption so pronounced, that secular rulers stepped in. King Henry III appointed Clement II (1046-1047) to the office of pope "because no Roman clergyman could be found who was free of the pollution of simony and fornication"![11]

A number of the popes had committed murders, but Innocent III (1198-1216) surpassed all of his predecessors in killing. Though he did not do the killing *personally,* he promoted the most devilish thing in human history—the *Inquisition.* Estimates of the number of heretics that Innocent (not so innocently) had killed run as high as one million people! For over five hundred years, popes used the inquisition to maintain their power against those who did not agree with the teachings of the Romish church.



Pope Innocent III.

In conflicts with cardinals and kings, numerous charges were brought against Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303). Says *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* "Scarcely any possible crime was omitted—infidelity, heresy, simony, gross and unnatural immorality, idolatry, magic, loss of the Holy Land, death of Celestine V, etc....Protestant historians, generally, and even modern Catholic writers...class him among the wicked popes, as an ambitious, haughty, and unrelenting man, deceitful also and treacherous, his whole pontificate one record of evil."[12] It is not necessary to insist that all charges brought against him were true, but all cannot be dismissed either. During his reign the poet Dante visited Rome and described the Vatican as a "sewer of



Pope Boniface VIII.

corruption." He assigned Boniface (along with Popes Nicolas III and Clement V) to "the lower parts of hell."

Though seeking to put emphasis on certain good traits of Boniface, "Catholic historians...admit, however, the explosive violence and *offensive phraseology* of some of his public documents."[13] An example of this "offensive phraseology" would be his statement that "to enjoy oneself and to lie carnally with women or with boys is no more a sin than rubbing one's hands together."[14] On other occasions, apparently in those "explosive" moments he called Christ a "hypocrite" and professed to be an atheist.

Yet—and this sounds almost *unbelievable*—it was this pope that in 1302 issued the well-known "Unam Sanctum" which officially declared that the Roman Catholic Church is the *only true church,* outside of which no one can be saved, and says: "We, therefore, assert, define and pronounce that it is *necessary to salvation* to believe that every human being is subject to the Pontiff of Rome." Because there have been sinful popes, being "subject" to the pope has raised a question. Should a sinful pope still be obeyed? The Catholic answer is this: "A sinful pope...remains a member of the (visible) church and is to be treated as a sinful, unjust ruler for whom we must pray, *but from whom we may not withdraw our obedience.*"[15]

From 1305 to 1377 the papal palace was at Avignon, France. During this time, Petrarch accused the papal household of "rape, adultery, and all manner of fornication." In many parishes men insisted on priests keeping concubines "as a protection for their own families!"[16]

During the Council of Constance, three popes, and sometimes four, were every morning cursing each other and calling their opponents antichrists, demons, adulterers, sodomists, enemies of God and man. One of these "popes", John XXIII (1410-1415) "was accused by thirty seven witnesses (mostly bishops and priests) of fornication, adultery, incest, sodomy, simony, theft, and murder! It was proved by a legion of witnesses that he had seduced and violated three hundred nuns. His own secretary, Niem, said that he had at Boulogne, kept a harem, where not less than two hundred girls had been the victims of his lubricity."[17] Altogether the Council charged him with fifty-four crimes of the worst kind.[18]

A vatican record offers this information about his immoral reign. "His lordship, Pope John, committed perversity with the wife of his brother, incest with holy nuns, intercourse with virgins, adultery with the married, and all sorts of sex crimes...wholly given to sleep and other carnal desires, totally adverse to the life and teaching of Christ...he was publicly called the Devil incarnate."[19] To increase his wealth, Pope John taxed about everything—including prostitution, gambling, and usury. He has been called "the most depraved criminal who ever sat on the papal throne."

Pope Pius II (1458-1464) was said to have been the father of many illegitimate children. He "spoke openly of the methods he used to seduce women, encouraged young men to, and even offered to instruct them in methods of, self-indulgence."[21] Pius was followed by Paul II (1464-1471) who maintained a house full of concubines. His papal tiara outweighed a palace in its worth. Next came Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484) who financed his wars by selling church offices to the highest bidders[22] and "used the papacy to enrich himself and his relatives. He made eight of his nephews cardinals, while as yet some of them were mere boys. In luxurious and lavish entertainment, he rivaled the Caesars. In wealth and pomp he and his relatives surpassed the old Roman families."[23]

Pope Innocent VIII (1484-1492) was the father of sixteen children by various women. Some of his children celebrated their marriages in the Vatican.[24] *The Catholic Encyclopedia* mentions only "two illegitimate children, Franceschetto and Teodorina" from the days of a "licentious youth."[25] Like numerous other popes, he multiplied church offices and sold them for vast sums of money. He permitted bull fights on St. Peter's square.

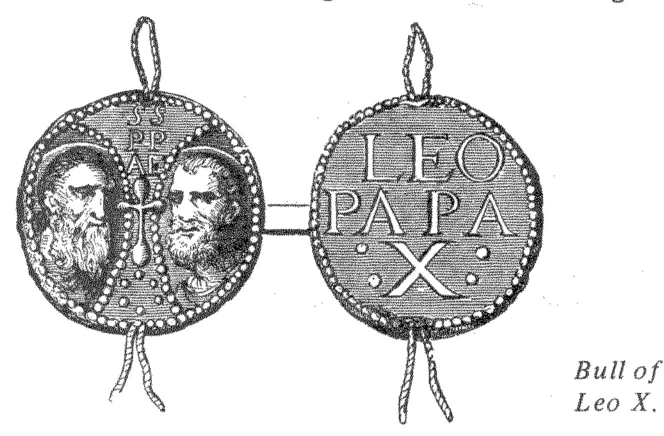
Next came Rodergio Borgia who took the name of Alexander VI (1492-1503), having won his election to the papacy by bribing the cardinals. Before becoming pope, while a cardinal and archbishop, he lived in sin with a lady of Rome,



Alexander VI.

Vanozza dei Catanei; and afterward, with her daughter Rosa, by whom he had five children. On his coronation day, he appointed his son—a youth of vile temper and habits—as archbishop of Valencia.[26] Many consider Alexander VI to be the most corrupt of the Renaissance popes. He lived in public incest with his two sisters and his own daughter, Lucretia, from whom, it is said, he had a child. On October 31, 1501, he conducted a sex orgy in the Vatican, the equal of which for sheer horror has never been duplicated in the annals of human history.[28]

According to *Life* magazine, Pope Paul III (1534-1549) as cardinal had fathered three sons and a daughter. On the day of his coronation he celebrated the baptism of his two great-grandchildren. He appointed two of his teenage nephews as cardinals, sponsored festivals with singers, dancers, and jesters, and sought advice from astrologers.[29]



Bull of Leo X.

Pope Leo X (1513-1521) was born December 11, 1475. He received tonsure at age 7, was made an abbot at 8, and a cardinal at 13! The illustration given above shows the Bull of Pope Leo X. On one side of the leaden seal appears the apostles Peter and Paul, on the other the pope's name and title. The word "bull" (from a Latin word linked with roundness) was first applied to the seals which authenticated papal documents and later to the documents also.

The Catholic Encyclopedia says that Pope Leo X "gave himself up *unrestrainedly* to amusements that were provided in lavish abundance. He was possessed by an insatiable love of pleasure...He loved to give banquets and expensive enter-

tainments, accompanied by *revelry* and *carousing.*"[30]

During those days, Martin Luther, while still a priest of the papal church, traveled to Rome. As he caught the first glimpse of the seven-hilled city, he fell to the ground and said: "Holy Rome, I salute thee." He had not spent much time there, however, until he saw that Rome was anything but a holy city. Iniquity existed among all classes of the clergy. Priests told indecent jokes and used awful profanity, even during Mass. The papal court was served at supper by twelve naked girls.[31] "No one can imagine what sins and infamous actions are committed in Rome," he said, "they must be seen and heard to be believed. Thus they are in the habit of saying, 'If there is a hell, Rome is built over it'."

One day during Luther's visit to Rome, he noticed a statue on one of the public streets that led to St. Peter's—the statue of a *female* pope. Because it was an object of disgust to the popes, no pope would ever pass down that certain street. "I am astonished", said Luther, "how the popes allow the statue to remain."[32] Forty years after Luther's death, the statue was removed by Pope Sixtus V.

Though *The Catholic Encyclopedia* regards the story of pope Joan as a mere tale, it gives the following summary: "After Leo IV (847-855) the Englishman John of Mainz occupied the papal chair two years, seven months and four days, he was, it is alleged, a woman. When a girl, she was taken to Athens in male clothes by her lover, and there made such progress in learning that no one was her equal. She came to Rome, where she taught science, and thereby attracted the attention of learned men...and was finally chosen as pope, but, becoming pregnant by one of her trusted attendants, she gave birth to a child during a procession from St. Peter's to the Lateran...There she died almost immediately, and it is said she was buried at the same place."[33]

Was there really a female pope? Prior to the Reformation which exposed so much error in the Romish church, the story was believed by chroniclers, bishops, and by popes themselves. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says, "In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries this popess was already counted as an historical personage, whose existence *no one doubted.* She had her place among the carved busts which stood in Siena cathedral. Under Clement VII (1592-1595),

and at his request, she was *transformed* into Pope Zacharias. The heretic Hus, in defence of his false doctrine before the Council of Constance, referred to the popess, and no one offered to question the fact of her existence."[34] Some have questioned how Pope Clement could have a female pope, named Joan, "transformed" into a male pope, named Zacharias, centuries after she had died!

Having mentioned the gross immorality that has existed in the lives of some of the popes, we do not wish to leave the impression that *all* popes have been as bad as the ones mentioned. But we do believe this evidence seriously weakens the doctrine of "apostolic succession", the claim that the Roman Catholic Church is the one true church because it can trace a line of popes back to *Peter.* Is this really an important point? If so, each of these popes, even those who were known to be immoral and cruel, must be included. There is even the possibility of a female pope to make the succession *complete!* But salvation is not dependent on tracing a line of popes back to Peter—or even on a system of religion claiming to *represent* Christ. Salvation is found in *Christ himself.*

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Are Popes Infallible?

ADDING TO THE many contradictions with which the Romish system was already plagued, there were popes, like the god Janus of olden times, who began to claim they were "infallible." People naturally questioned how infallibility could be linked with the papal office when some of the popes had been very poor examples in morals and integrity. And if the infallibility be applied only to *doctrines* pronounced by the popes, how was it that some popes had disagreed with other popes? Even a number of the popes—including Virilinus, Innocent III, Clement IV, Gregory XI, Hadrian VI, and Paul IV—had rejected the doctrine of papal infallibility! Just how could all of this be explained in an acceptable manner and formulated into a dogma? Such was the task of the Vatican Council of 1870. The Council sought to narrow the meaning of infallibility down to a workable definition, applying such only to papal pronouncements made "ex cathedra." The wording finally adopted was this: "The Roman Pontiff, when he speaks ex cathedra—that is, when in the exercise of his office as pastor and teacher of all Christians he defines...a doctrine of faith or morals to be held by the whole Church—is, by reason of the Divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, possessed of that infallibility...and consequently such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable."[1] All of the problems were not solved by this wording, nevertheless papal infallibility became an official dogma of the Roman Catholic Church at the Vatican Council of 1870.

Knowing the history of the popes, several Catholic bishops opposed making papal infallibility a dogma at the council. One of these, Bishop Joseph Strossmayer (1815-1905), is described in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* as "one of the most notable opponents of papal infallibility."[2] He pointed out that some of the popes had opposed other popes. Special



mention was made of how Pope Stephen VI (896-897) brought former Pope Formosus (891-896) to trial.

The famous story of one pope bringing another to trial is one of sheer horror, for Pope Formosus had been *dead* for eight months! Nevertheless, the body was brought from the tomb and placed on a throne. There before a group of bishops and cardinals was the former pope, dressed in the rich apparel of the papacy, a crown upon his loose scalp, and the scepter of the holy office in the stiff fingers of his rotting hand!

As the trial got underway, the stench of the dead body filled the assembly hall. Pope Stephen stepped forward and did the questioning. Of course no answers were given to the charges by the dead man; so he was proven guilty as charged! With this, the bright robes were ripped from his body, the crown from his skull, the fingers used in bestowing the pontifical blessing were hacked off and his body was thrown into the street. Behind a cart, the body was dragged through the streets of Rome and finally cast into the Tiber.[3]

Thus one pope condemned another. Then a short time later, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* points out, "the second successor of Stephen had the body of Formosus, which a monk had drawn from the Tiber, reinterred with full honors in St. Peter's. He furthermore annulled at a synod the decisions of the court of Stephen VI, and declared all orders conferred by Formosus valid. John IX confirmed these acts at two synods...On the other hand Sergius III (904-911) approved in a Roman synod the desicions of Stephen's synod against Formosus...Sergius and his party meted out severe treatment to the bishops consecrated by Formosus, who in turn had meanwhile conferred orders on many other clerics, a policy which gave rise to the *greatest confusion.*"[4] Such sharp disagreement between popes certainly argues against the idea of papal infallibility.

Pope Honorius I, after his death, was denounced as a heretic by the Sixth Council held in the year 680. Pope Leo II

confirmed his condemnation. If popes are infallible, how could one condemn another?

Pope Vigilius, after condemning certain books, removed his condemnation, afterward condemned them again and then retracted his condemnation, then condemned them again! Where is infallibility here?

Dueling was authorized by Pope Eugene III (1145-53). Later Pope Julius II (1503-13) and Pope Pius IV (1559-65) forbade it.

At one time in the eleventh century, there were three rival popes, all of which were disposed by the council convened by the Emperor Henry III. Later in the same century Clement III was opposed by Victor III and afterwards by Urban II. How could popes be infallible when they opposed each other?

What is known as the "great schism" came in 1378 and lasted for fifty years. Italians elected Urban VI and the French cardinals chose Clement VII. Popes cursed each other year after year, until a council disposed both and elected another !

Pope Sixtus V had a version of the Bible prepared which he declared to be authentic. Two years later Pope Clement VIII declared that it was full of errors and ordered another to be made!

Pope Gregory I repudiated the title of "Universal Bishop" as being "profane, superstitious, haughty, and invented by the first apostate." Yet, through the centuries, other popes have claimed this title.

Pope Hadrian II (867-872) declared civil marriages to be valid, but Pope Pius VII (1800-23) condemned them as invalid.

Pope Eugene IV (1431-47) condemned Joan of Arc to be burned alive as a witch. Later, another pope, Benedict IV, in 1919, declared her to be a "saint."

When we consider the hundreds of times and ways that popes have contradicted each other over the centuries, we can understand how the idea of papal infallibility is difficult for many people to accept. While it is true that most papal statements are not made within the narrow limits of the 1870 "ex cathedra" definition, yet if popes have erred in so many other ways, how can we believe they are guaranteed a divine infallibility for a few moments if and when

they should indeed decide to speak ex cathedra?

Popes have taken to themselves such titles as "Most Holy Lord", "Chief of the Church in the World", "Sovereign Pontiff of Bishops", "High Priest", "the Mouth of Jesus Christ", "Vicar of Christ", and others. Said Pope Leo XIII on June 20, 1894, "We hold upon the earth the place of God Almighty." During the Vatican Council of 1870, on January 9, it was proclaimed: "The Pope is *Christ* in office, *Christ* in jurisdiction and power...we bow down before thy voice, O Pius, as before the voice of *Christ,* the God of truth; in clinging to thee, we cling to *Christ.*"

But the historical sketch that we have given plainly shows that the pope is NOT "Christ in office" or in any other way. The contrast is apparent. The very expensive crowns worn by the popes have cost millions of dollars. Jesus, during his earthly life, wore no crown except the crown of thorns. The pope is waited on by servants. What a contrast to the lowly Nazarene who came not to be ministered to, but to minister! The popes dress in garments that are very elaborate and costly—patterned after those of the Roman emperors of pagan days. Such vanity is contrasted to our savior who wore the gown of a peasant. The immorality of many of the popes—especially in past centuries—stands in striking contrast to the Christ who is perfect in holiness and purity.

In view of these things, we believe the claim that the pope is the "Vicar of Christ" is without any basis in fact. As early as the year 1612 it was pointed out, as Andreas Helwig did in his book *Roman Antichrist,* that the title "Vicar of Christ" has a numerical value of 666. Written as "Vicar of the Son of God" in Latin, *Vicarivs Filii Dei,* the letters with numerical value are these: i equals 1 (used six times), l equals 50, V equals 5, c equals 100, and D equals 500. When these are all counted up, the total is 666. This number reminds us, of course, of Revelation 13:18, "Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six."

It should be pointed out in all fairness, however, that numerous names and titles, depending on how they are written or which language is used, can produce this number. The examples given here will be of special interest because they are linked with Rome and with Roman Catholicism.

According to Hislop, the original name of Rome was Saturnia, meaning "the city of Saturn." Saturn was the secret name revealed only to the initiates of the Chaldean mysteries, which—in Chaldee—was spelled with four letters: STUR. In this language, S was 60, T was 400, U was 6, and R was 200, a total of 666.

Nero Caesar was one of the greatest persecutors of Christians and emperor of Rome at the height of its power. His name, when written in Hebrew letters, eqüals 666.

The Greek letters of the word "Lateinos" (Latin), the historical language of Rome in all its official acts, amount to 666. In Greek, L is 30, a is 1, t is 300, e is 5, i is 10, n is 50, o is 70, and s is 200, a total of 666. This was pointed out by Irenaeus as early as the third century. This same word also means "Latin man" and is but the Greek form of the name Romulus, from which the city of Rome is named. This name in Hebrew, Romiith, also totals 666.

Unlike the Greeks and Hebrews, the Romans did not use all letters of their alphabet for numbers. They used only *six* letters: D, C, L, X, V, and I. (All other numbers were made up of combinations of these*) It is interesting and perhaps significant that the six letters which make up the *Roman* numeral system when added together total exactly 666.

D	500
C	100
L	50
X	10
V	5
I	1
total = 666	

Turning to the Bible itself, in the Old Testament, we read that king Solomon each year received 666 talents of gold (1 Kings 10:14). This wealth played an important part in leading him astray. In the New Testament, the letters of the Greek word *euporia,* from which the word WEALTH is translated, total 666. Out of all the 2,000 Greek nouns of the New Testament, there is only one other word that has this numerical value, the word *paradosis,* translated TRADITION (Acts 19:25; Matt. 15:2). Wealth and tradition—interestingly enough—were the two great corruptors of the Roman Church. Wealth corrupted in practice and honesty; tradition corrupted in doctrine.

* The "M" has now come to be used also as a Roman numeral representing 1000. But as E. W. Bullinger points out in his book *Numbers in Scripture* (p. 284), originally 1000 was written as CI with another C turned around, that is CIƆ . This was later simplified into ↀ and finally as M.

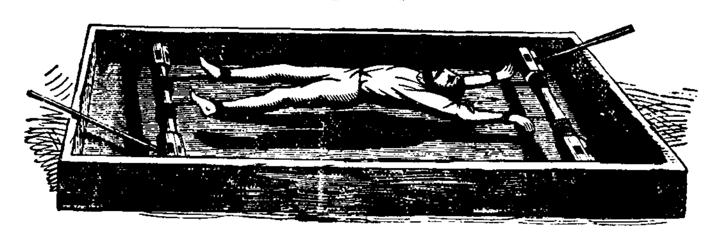
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Inhuman Inquisition

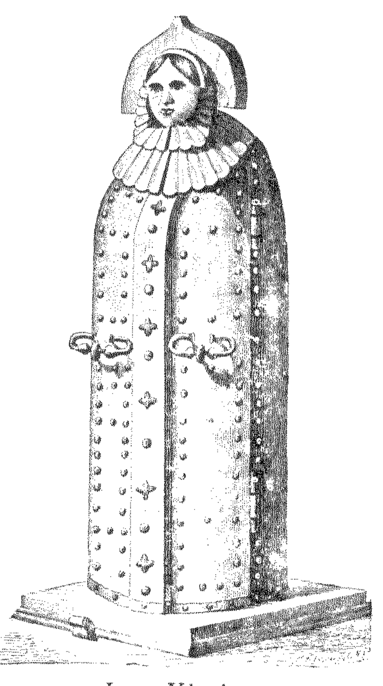
SO OPENLY CORRUPT did the fallen church become in the Middle Ages, we can readily understand why in many places men rose up in protest. Many were those noble souls who rejected the false claims of the pope, looking instead to the Lord Jesus for salvation and truth. These were called "heretics" and were bitterly persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church.

One of the documents that ordered such persecutions was the inhuman "Ad exstirpanda" issued by Pope Innocent IV in 1252. This document stated that heretics were to be "crushed like venomous snakes." It formally approved the use of *torture.* Civil authorities were ordered to burn heretics. "The aforesaid Bull 'Ad exstirpanda' remained thenceforth a fundamental document of the Inquisition, renewed or reinforced by several popes, Alexander IV (1254-61), Clement IV (1265-68), Nicholas IV (1288-92), Boniface VIII (1294-1303), and others. The civil authorities, therefore, were enjoined by the popes, *under pain of excommunication* to execute the legal sentences that condemned impenitent heretics to the *stake.* It is to be noted that excommunication itself was no trifle, for, if the person excommunicated did not free himself from the excommunication within a year, *he* was held by the legislation of that period to be a *heretic,* and incurred *all the penalties* that affected heresy."[1]

Men pondered long in those days on how they could devise methods that would produce the most torture and pain. One of the most popular methods was the use of the rack, a long table on which the accused was tied by the hands and feet, back down, and stretched by rope and windlass. This process dislocated joints and caused great pain.



Heavy pincers were used to tear out fingernails or were applied red-hot to sensitive parts of the body. Rollers with sharp knife blades and spikes were used, over which the heretics were rolled back and forth. There was the thumbscrew, an instrument made for disarticulating fingers and "Spanish boots" which were used to crush the legs and feet. The "iron virgin" was a hollow instrument the size and figure of a woman. Knives were arranged in such a way and under such pressure that the accused were lacerated in its deadly embrace. This torture device was sprayed with "holy water" and inscribed with the Latin words meaning, "Glory be only to God."[2]



Iron Virgin.



Inquisition Torture room by Picart (1673-1733).

Victims after being stripped of their clothing had their arms tied behind their backs with a hard cord. Weights were attached to their feet. The action of a pulley suspended them in mid-air or dropped and raised them with a jerk, dislocating joints of the body. While such torture was being employed, priests holding up crosses would attempt to get the heretics to recant.

Ridpath's History of the World includes an illustration of the work of the Inquisition in the Netherlands. Twenty-one Protestants are hanging from the tree. A man on a ladder is about to be hanged, below him is a priest holding a cross.[3]



Execution of Protestants in the Netherlands.

"In the year 1554 Francis Gamba, a Lombard, of the Protestant persuasion, was apprehended and condemned to death by the sentence of Milan. At the place of execution, a monk presented a cross to him, to whom Gamba said, 'My mind is so full of the *real* merits and goodness of Christ that I want not a piece of *senseless stick* to put me in mind of Him.' For this expression his tongue was bored through and he was afterwards burned."[4]

Some who rejected the teachings of the Roman church had molten lead poured into their ears and mouths. Eyes were gouged out and others were cruelly beaten with whips. Some were forced to jump from cliffs onto long spikes fixed below, where, quivering from pain, they slowly died. Others were choked to death with mangled pieces of their own bodies, with urine, or excrement. At night, the victims of the Inquisition were chained closely to the floor or wall where they were a helpless prey to the rats and vermin that populated those bloody torture chambers.

The religious intolerance that prompted the Inquisition caused wars which involved entire cities. In 1209 the city of Beziers was taken by men who have been promised by the pope that by engaging in the crusade against heretics they

would at death bypass purgatory and immediately enter heaven. Sixty thousand, it is reported, in this city perished by the sword while blood flowed in the streets. At Lavaur in 1211 the governor was hanged on a gibbet and his wife thrown into a well and crushed with stones. Four hundred people in this town were burned alive. The crusaders attended high mass in the morning, then proceeded to take other towns of the area. In this siege, it is estimated that 100,000 Albigenses (Protestants) fell in one day. Their bodies were heaped together and burned.

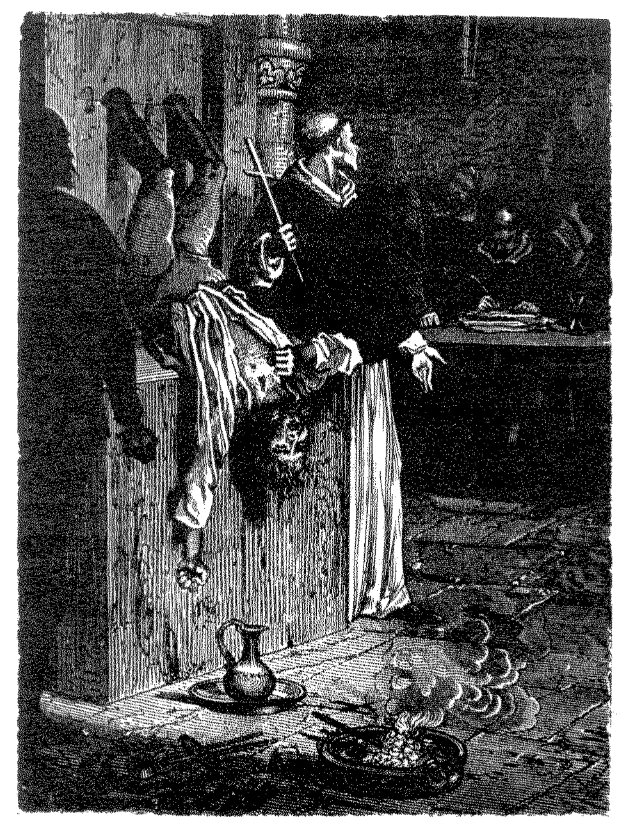
At the massacre of Merindol, five hundred women were locked in a barn which was set on fire. If any leaped from windows, they were received on the points of spears. Women were openly and pitifully violated. Children were murdered before their parents who were powerless to protect them. Some people were hurled from cliffs or stripped of clothing and dragged through the streets. Similar methods were used in the massacre of Orange in 1562. The Italian army was sent by Pope Pius IV and commanded to slay men, women, and children. The command was carried out with terrible cruelty, the people being exposed to shame and torture of every description.

Ten thousand Huguenots (Protestants) were killed in the bloody massacre in Paris on "St. Bartholomew's Day", 1572. The French king went to mass to return solemn thanks that so many heretics were slain. The papal court received the news with great rejoicing and Pope GregoryXIII, in grand procession, went to the Church of St. Louis to give thanks! He ordered the papal mint to make coins commemorating this event. The coins showed an angel with sword in one hand and a cross in the other, before whom a band of Huguenots, with horror on their faces, were fleeing. The words *Ugonottorum Stranges 1572* which signify "The slaughter of the Huguenots, 1572", appeared on the coins.

An illustration from *Ridpath's History of the World*, as seen on the next page, shows the work of the Inquisition in Holland. A Protestant man is hanging by his feet in stocks. The fire is heating a poker to brand him and blind his eyes.[5]

Some of the popes that today are acclaimed as "great" by the Romish church lived and thrived during those days. Why didn't they open the dungeon doors and quench the murderous fires that blackened the skies of Europe for centuries? If the selling of indulgences, or people worshipping statues as idols, or popes living in immorality can be explained as "abuses" or excused because these things were done *contrary* to the official laws of the church, what can be

said about the *Inquisition?* It cannot be explained away as easily, for though sometimes torture was carried out beyond what was actually prescribed, the fact remains that *the Inquisition was ordered by papal decree and confirmed by pope after pope!* Can any believe that such actions were representative of Him who said to turn the cheek, to forgive our enemies, and to do good to them that despitefully use us?



Inquisition scene in Holland.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

"Lords Over God's Heritage"

THE HIGHEST RANKING men of the Roman Catholic Church, next to the pope, are a group of "cardinals." The Bible says that Christ placed apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in his church (Eph. 4:11). But we never find any indication that he ordained a group of cardinals. To the contrary, the original cardinals were a group of leading priests in the *ancient* pagan religion of Rome—long *before* the Christian Era. A booklet published by the Knights of Columbus, *This is the Catholic Church,* explains: "In *ancient* times the cardinals were the chief clergy of Rome—the word is derived from the Latin word *cardo,* 'hinge', and thus referred to those who were the pivotal members of the clergy."[1]

But why were these priests of ancient Rome linked with the word "hinge"? They were, evidently, the priests of Janus, the pagan god of doors and *hinges!* Janus was referred to as "the god of beginnings"—thus January, the beginning month of our Roman calendar, comes from his name. As god of doors, he was their protector or caretaker. Even today, the keeper of the doors is called a *janitor,* a word from the name Janus!

Janus was known as "the opener and shutter."[2] Because he was worshipped as such in Asia Minor, we can better understand the words of Jesus to the church at Philadelphia: "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that *openeth* and no man *shutteth:* and *shutteth,* and no man *openeth*...I have set before you an *open door*" (Rev. 3:7, 8). The pagan god Janus was a counterfeit; Jesus was the *true* opener and shutter!

"The college of Cardinals, with the Pope at its head", writes Hislop, "is just the counterpart of the pagan college of Pontiffs, with its Pontifex Maximus, or Sovereign Pontiff, which is known to have been framed on the model of the grand original Council of Pontiffs at Babylon!"[3] When

paganism and Christianity were mixed together, the cardinals, priests of the hinge, that had served in *pagan* Rome, eventually found a place in *papal* Rome.

The garments worn by the cardinals of the Catholic Church are *red.* Cardinal birds, cardinal flowers, and cardinal priests are all linked together by the color red. The Bible mentions certain princes of Babylon who dressed in red garments: "...men portrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermillion"—bright red—"girded with girdles upon the loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the *Babylonians* of Chaldea" (Ezekiel 23:14, 15). The harlot symbolizing Babylonish religion was dressed in scarlet-red garments (Rev. 17:4). From ancient times, the color red or scarlet has been associated with sin. Isaiah, in his day, said: "Though your sins be as *scarlet,* they shall be white as snow, though they be *red* like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). Adultery is sometimes referred to as the scarlet sin. The color red is associated with prostitution, as in the expression "red-light district."

In view of these things, it does not seem unfair to question why red would be used for the garments of the highest ranking men in the Romish church. We are not saying it is wrong to wear red, yet does it not seem like a curious custom for cardinals? Are we to suppose such garments were worn by the apostles? Or is it more likely that the red garments of the cardinals were copied from those worn by priests of pagan Rome?

The priests of the hinge in pagan days were known as the "flamens." The word is taken from *flare,* meaning one who blows or kindles the sacred fire.[4] They were the keepers of the holy flame which they fanned with the mystic fan of Bacchus. Like the color of the fire they tended, their garments were flame color—red. They were servants of the pontifex maximus in pagan days and the cardinals today are the servants of the pope who also claims the title pontifex maximus. The flamens were divided into three distinct groups and so are the cardinals—Cardinal-bishops, Cardinal-priests, and Cardinal-deacons.

Next in authority under the pope and the cardinals are the *bishops* of the Catholic Church. Unlike the titles "pope" and "cardinal", the Bible does mention bishops. Like the word

"saints", however, the word "bishop" has been commonly misunderstood. Many think of a bishop as a minister of superior rank, having authority over a group of other ministers and churches. This idea is reflected in the word "cathedral", which comes from *cathedra*, meaning "throne." A cathedral, unlike other churches, is the one in which the throne of the bishop is located.

But turning to the Bible, *all* ministers are called bishops —not just ministers of certain cities. Paul instructed Titus to "ordain elders in *every* city" (Titus 1:5), and then went on to speak of these elders as bishops (verse 7). When Paul instructed "the *elders*" of Ephesus, he said: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers* (bishops), to *feed* (pastor) the church of God" (Acts 20:17, 28). The word translated "overseers" is the same word that is elsewhere translated bishops. The word "feed" means the same as the word translated pastor. These ministers were referred to as elders, bishops, overseers, and pastors—all of these expressions referring to exactly the same office. Plainly enough, a bishop—in the Scriptures—was not a minister of a large city who sat on a throne and exercised authority over a group of other ministers. Each church had its elders and these elders were bishops! This was understood by Martin Luther. "But as for the bishops that we now have", he remarked, "of these the Scriptures know nothing; they were instituted...so that one might rule over many ministers."[5]

Even before the New Testament was completed, it was needful to give warnings about the doctrine of the Nicolaitines (Rev. 2:6). According to Scofield, the word "Nicolaitines" comes from *nikao*, "to conquer", and *laos*, "laity", which, if correct, "refers to the earliest form of the notion of a priestly order, or 'clergy', which later divided an equal brotherhood (Mt. 23:8), into 'priests' and 'laity'."[6]

The word "priest" in a very real sense belongs to every Christian believer—not just ecclesiastical leaders. Peter instructed ministers not to be "lords over God's *heritage*" (1 Peter 5:1-3). The word translated "heritage" is *kleeron* and means "clergy"! As *The Matthew Henry Commentary* explains, all the children of God are given the "title of God's heritage or *clergy*...the word is never restrained in the New Testament to the ministers of religion only."

In rejecting an artificial division between "clergy" and "laity", this is not to say that ministers should not receive proper respect and honor, "especially they who labor in the word" (1 Tim. 5:17). But because of this division, too often people of a congregation are prone to place all responsibility for the work of God upon the minister. Actually God has a ministry for all of his people. This is not to say that all have a *pulpit* ministry!—but even giving a cup of cold water is not without its purpose and reward (Matt. 10:42). It would be well for each of us to pray,"Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do?" (Acts 9:6). In the New Testament, the full work of a church was not placed on one individual. Churches were commonly pastored by a *plurality* of elders, as numerous scriptures show. "They ordained elders (plural) in every church" (Acts 14:19-23) and in "every city" (Titus 1:5). Expressions such as "the elders (plural) of the church" are commonly used (Acts 20:17; James 5:14).

All who have been washed from their sins by the blood of Christ are "priests unto God" and are "a royal priesthood" (Rev. 1:6; 1 Peter 2:9). The priesthood of *all* believers is clearly the New Testament position. But as men exalted themselves as "lords over God's heritage", people were taught that they needed a priest to whom they could tell their sins, a priest must sprinkle them, a priest must give them the last rites, a priest must say masses for them, etc. They were taught to depend upon a human priest, while the *true* high priest, the Lord Jesus, was obscured from their view by a dark cloud of man-made traditions.

Unlike Elihu who did not want to "give flattering titles unto man" (Job 32:21), those who exalted themselves as "lords" over the people began to take unto themselves titles which were unscriptural, and—in some cases—titles that should belong only to God! As a warning against this practice, Jesus said, "Call no man your *father* upon the earth: for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:9-12).

It is difficult to understand how a church claiming to have Christ as its founder—after a few centuries—would begin to use the very titles that he said NOT to use! Nevertheless, the

bishop of Rome began to be called by the title "pope", which is only a variation of the word "father." The priests of Catholicism are called "father." We will remember that one of the leading branches of the "Mysteries" that came to Rome in the early days was Mithraism. In this religion, those who presided over the sacred ceremonies were called "fathers."[7] An article on Mithraism in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says, "The *fathers* (used here as a religious title) conducted the worship. The chief of the fathers, *a sort of pope,* who always lived at *Rome,* was called 'Pater Patrum'."[8] Now if the pagans in Rome called their priests by the title "father", and if Christ said to call no man "father", from what source did the Roman Catholic custom of calling a priest by this title come—from Christ or paganism?

Even the Bible gives an example of a pagan priest being called "father." A man by the name of Micah said to a young Levite, "Dwell with me, and be unto me a *father and a priest*" (Judges 17:10). Micah was a grown man with a son of his own; the Levite was "a young man." The title "father" was obviously used in a religious sense, as a priestly designation. Micah wanted him to be a father-priest in his "house of gods." This was a type of Catholicism, for while the young priest claimed to speak the word of the "LORD" (Judges 18:6), the worship was clearly mixed with idols and paganism.

The Roman Catholic Church uses the title "Monsignor" which means "My Lord." It is somewhat of a general title, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* explains, and can be properly used in addressing several of the higher church leaders. "Instead of addressing patriarchs as 'Vostra Beautitudine', archbishops as 'Your Grace', bishops as 'My Lord', abbots as 'Gracious Lord', one may without any breach of etiquette salute all equally as Monsignor."[9] One of the meanings of "arch" is *master.* Using titles such as archpriest, archbishop, archdeacon, is like saying masterpriest, etc. The superior of the order of Dominicans is called "master general." We need only to cite, again, the words of Christ which are in contrast to such titles: "Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even Christ."

Even the title "Reverend", Biblically speaking, is applied only to God. It appears one time in the Bible: "Holy and *reverend* is his name" (Psalms 111:9). The word "reverend"

comes from the Latin *revere* and was first applied to the English clergy as a title of respect during the fifteenth century. Variations of this title are these: The Reverend, The Very Reverend, The Most Reverend, and The Right Reverend.

When Jesus spoke against flattering titles, the basic thought was that of humility and equality among his disciples. Should we not, then, reject the supposed authority of those high offices in which men seek to make themselves "lords over God's heritage"? And instead of men receiving glory, should not all the glory be given to God?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

An Unmarried Priesthood

"THE SPIRIT SPEAKETH expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; FORBIDDING TO MARRY..." (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

In this passage, Paul warned that a departure from the true faith would occur in later or latter times. "This does not necessarily imply the last ages of the world", writes Adam Clarke in his noted commentary, "but any times consequent to those in which the Church then lived."[1] Actually, this departure from the faith, as those who know history understand, took place back in the early centuries.

The first Christians recognized the worship of pagan *gods* as the worship of *devils* (1 Cor. 10:19, 21). It follows, then, that Paul's warning about "doctrines of devils" could certainly refer to the teachings of the pagan mysteries. He made special mention of the doctrine of "forbidding to marry." In the mystery religion, this doctrine did not apply to all people. It was, instead, a doctrine of *priestly* celibacy. Such unmarried priests, Hislop points out, were members of the higher orders of the priesthood of the queen Semiramis. "Strange as it may seem, yet the voice of antiquity assigns to the abandoned queen the invention of clerical celibacy, and that in its most stringent form."[2]

Not all nations to which the mystery religion spread required priestly celibacy, as in Egypt where priests were allowed to marry. But, "every scholar knows that when the worship of Cybele, the Babylonian Goddess, was introduced into Pagan Rome, it was introduced in its primitive form, with its celibate clergy."[3] Instead of the doctrine of "forbidding to marry" promoting purity, however, the excesses committed by the celibate priests of *pagan* Rome were so bad that the Senate felt they should be expelled from the

Roman republic. Later, after priestly celibacy became established in *papal* Rome, similar problems developed. "When Pope Paul V sought the suppression of the licensed brothels in the 'Holy City', the Roman Senate petitioned against his carrying his design into effect, on the ground that the existence of such places was the only means of hindering the priests from seducing their wives and daughters."[4]

Rome, in those days, was a "holy city" in name only. Reports estimate that there were about 6,000 prostitutes in this city with a population not exceeding 100,000.[5] Historians tell us that "all the ecclesiastics had mistresses, and all the convents of the Capitol were houses of bad fame."[6] A fish pond at Rome which was situated near a convent was drained by order of Pope Gregory. At the bottom were found over 6,000 infant skulls.

Cardinal Peter D'Ailly said he dared not describe the immorality of the nunneries, and that "taking the veil" was simply another mode of becoming a public prostitute. Violations were so bad in the ninth century that St. Theodore Studita forbade even female animals on monastery property! In the year 1477, night dances and orgies were held in the Catholic cloister at Kercheim that are described in history as being worse than those to be seen in the public houses of prostitution.[7] Priests came to be known as "the husbands of all the women." Albert the Magnificent, Archbishop of Hamburg, exhorted his priests: *"Si non caste, tamen caute"* (If you can't be chaste, at least be careful). Another German bishop began to charge the priests in his district a tax for each female they kept and each child that was born. He discovered there were *eleven thousand* women kept by the clergymen of his diocese.[8]

The Catholic Encyclopedia says the tendency of some to rake these scandals together and exaggerate details "is at least as marked as the tendency on the part of the Church's apologists to *ignore these uncomfortable pages of history altogether"!*[9] As with so many things, we do not doubt that extremes have existed on both sides. We realize also that with reports of immoral conduct there is the possibility of exaggeration. But even allowing for this, the problems that have accompanied the doctrine of "forbidding to marry" are too obvious to be ignored. *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* though seeking to explain and justify celibacy, admits there

have been *many* abuses. "We have no wish to deny or to palliate the *very low level* of morality to which at different periods of the world's history, and in different countries calling themselves Christian, the *Catholic priesthood* has occasionally sunk...corruption was *widespread*...How could it be otherwise when there were intruded into bishoprics on *every side* men of brutal nature and *unbridled passions,* who gave the *very worst* example to the clergy over whom they ruled?...A *large number* of the clergy, not only priests but bishops, openly took wives, and begot children to whom they transmitted their benefices."[10]

There is no rule in the Bible that requires a minister to be unmarried. The apostles were married (1 Cor. 9:5) and a bishop was to be "the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:2). Even *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says, "We do not find in the New Testament any indication of celibacy being made compulsory either upon the apostles or those whom they ordained."[11] The doctrine of "forbidding to marry" developed only gradually within the Catholic church. When the celibacy doctrine first began to be taught, many of the priests were married men. There was some question, though, if a priest whose wife died should marry again. A rule established at the Council of Neo-Caesarea in 315 "absolutely *forbids* a priest to contract a new marriage under the pain of desposition." Later, "at a Roman council held by Pope Siricius in 386 an edict was passed *forbidding* priests and deacons to have conjugal intercourse with their wives and the pope took steps to have the decree enforced in Spain and other parts of Christendom."[12] In these statements from *The Catholic Encyclopedia* the careful reader will notice the words "forbid" and "forbidding." The word "forbidding" is the *same* word the Bible uses when warning about "forbidding to marry"—but in exactly the *opposite* sense! The Bible terms forbidding to marry a "doctrine of *devils*."

Taking all of these things into consideration, we can see how Paul's prediction (1 Tim. 4:1-3) was fulfilled. Did a departure from the original faith come? Yes. Did people give heed to pagan doctrines, the doctrines of devils? Yes. Were priests forbidden to marry? Yes. And because of this forced celibacy, many of these priests ended up having their "consciences seared with a hot iron" and "spoke lies in hypocrisy" because of the immorality into which they fell.

History has shown the fulfillment of each part of this prophecy !

The doctrine of forbidding priests to marry met with other difficulties over the centuries because of the *confessional.* It is plain to see that the practice of girls and women confessing their moral weaknesses and desires to unmarried priests could easily result in many abuses. A former priest, Charles Chiniquy, who lived at the time of Abraham Lincoln and was personally acquainted with him, gives a full account of such corruption in connection with the confessional, along with actual cases, in his book *The Priest, The Woman, and The Confessional.* We are not suggesting that *all* priests should be judged by the mistakes or sins of *some.* We do not doubt that many priests have been very dedicated to the vows they have taken. Nevertheless, "the countless attacks" (to use the wording of *The Catholic Encyclopedia*) that have been made against the confessional were not, in many cases, without basis. That the doctrine of confession has caused difficulties for the Romish church, in one way or another, seems implied by the wording of *The Catholic Encyclopedia.* After mentioning the "countless attacks," it says, "If at the Reformation or since the Church could have surrendered a doctrine or abandoned a practice for the sake of peace and to soften a 'hard saying', confession would have been the first to disappear"![13]

In a carefully worded article, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* explains that the power to forgive sins belongs to God alone. Nevertheless, he exercises this power *through the priests.* A passage in John (20:22, 23) is interpreted to mean a priest can forgive or refuse to forgive sins. In order for him to make this decision, sins "specifically and in detail" (according to the Council of Trent) must be confessed to him. "How can a wise and prudent judgment be rendered if the priest be in ignorance of the cause on which judgment is pronounced? And how can he obtain the requisite knowledge unless it come from the spontaneous acknowledgment of the sinner?" Having given priests the authority to forgive sins, it is inconsistent to believe, says the article, that Christ "had intended to provide some other means of forgiveness such as confessing 'to God alone'." Confession to a priest for those who after baptism commit sins, is "necessary unto salvation."[14]

There is a type of confession that the Bible teaches, but it

is not confession to an *unmarried priest!* The Bible says, "Confess your faults *one to another*" (James 5:16). If this verse could be used to support the Catholic idea of confession, then not only should people confess to priests, but priests should confess to the people! When Simon of Samaria sinned, *after* having been baptized, Peter did not tell him to confess to him. He did not tell him to say the "Hail Mary" for a given number of times a day. Peter told him to "pray to *God*" for forgiveness (Acts 8:22)! When Peter sinned, he confessed to God and was forgiven; when Judas sinned, he confessed to a group of priests and committed suicide! (Matt. 27:3-5).

The idea of confessing to a priest came not from the *Bible,* but from *Babylon!* Secret confession was required before complete initiation was granted into the Babylonian mysteries. Once such confession was made, the victim was bound hand and foot to the priesthood. There can be no doubt that confessions were made in Babylon, for it is from such recorded confessions—and *only* from these—that historians have been able to formulate conclusions about the Babylonian concepts of right and wrong.[15]

The Babylonian idea of confession was known in many parts of the world. Salverte wrote of this practice among the Greeks. "All the Greeks from Delphi to Thermopylae, were initiated in the mysteries of the temple of Delphi. Their silence in regard to everything they were commanded to keep secret was secured by the general *confession* exacted of the aspirants after initiation." Certain types of confession were also known in the religions of Medo-Persia, Egypt, and Rome —before the dawn of Christianity.[16]

Black is the distinctive color of the clergy garments worn by the priests of the Roman Catholic Church and some Protestant denominations also follow this custom. But why black? Can any of us picture Jesus and his apostles wearing black garments? Black has for centuries been linked with *death.* Hearses, traditionally, have been black, black is worn by mourners at funerals, etc. If any suggest that black should be worn in honor of the death of Christ, we would only point out that Christ is no longer dead!

On the other hand, the Bible mentions certain priests of Baal that dressed in black! God's message through Zephaniah was this: "I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place,

and the name of the *chemarims* with the priests"(Zeph. 1:4). The "chemarims" were priests who wore black garments.[17] This same title is translated "idolatrous priests" in another passage about Baal worship (2 Kings 23:5). Adam Clarke says, "Probably they were an order made by the idolatrous kings of Judah, and called *kemarim*, from *camar*, which signifies to be...made dark, or black, because their business was constantly to attend sacrificial fires, and probably they wore *black* garments; hence the Jews in derision call Christian ministers *kemarim*, because of their black clothes and garments. Why we should imitate, in our sacerdotal dress, those priests of Baal, is strange to think and hard to tell"![18]

Another practice of the Catholic church which was also known in ancient times and among non-Christian people is the *tonsure*. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says the tonsure is "a sacred rite instituted by the Church by which...a Christian is received into the clerical order by shearing of his hair... Historically, the tonsure was *not in use in the primitive Church*...Even later St. Jerome (340-420) disapproved of clerics shaving their heads"![19] But by the sixth century the tonsure was quite common. The Council of Toledo made it a strict rule that all clerics must receive the tonsure, but today the custom is no longer practiced in many countries.

It is known and acknowledged that this custom was "not in use in the primitive Church." But it was known among pagan nations! Buddha shaved his head in obedience to a supposed divine command. The priests of Osiris in Egypt were distinguished by the shaving of their heads. The priests of Bacchus received the tonsure. In the Catholic church, the form of tonsure used in Britain was called the Celtic, with only a portion of hair being shaved from the front of the head. In Eastern form, the whole was shaved. But in the *Roman* form, called the tonsure of St. Peter, the *round* tonsure was used, leaving only hair


Roman Tonsure.

around the edges with the upper portion of the head bald. The Celtic tonsure of priests in Britain was ridiculed as being the tonsure of Simon Magus.[20] But why did Rome insist on the *round* tonsure? We may not have the full answer, but we do know that such was "an old practice of the priests of *Mithra,* who in their tonsures imitated the *solar disk.* As the sun-god was the great lamented god, and had his hair cut in a circular form, and the priests who lamented him had their hair cut in a similar manner, so in different countries those who lamented the dead and cut off their hair in honor of them, cut it in a circular form"![21] That such was a very ancient custom—known even at the time of Moses—may be seen right within the Bible. Such was *forbidden* for priests: "They shall not make *baldness* upon their head" (Lev. 21:5). And that such "baldness" was the *rounded* tonsure seems implied from Leviticus 19:27: "Ye shall not *round* the corners of your head."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Mass

DO PRIESTS HAVE power to change the elements of bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Christ during the mass ritual? Is this belief founded on the Scriptures?

The Catholic position is summed up in the following words from *The Catholic Encyclopedia:* "In the celebration of the Holy Mass, the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ. It is called *transubstantiation,* for in the Sacrament of the Eucharist *the substance of bread and wine do not remain,* but the *entire substance* of bread is *changed* into the *body* of Christ, and the *entire substance* of wine is *changed* into his *blood,* the species or outward semblance of bread and wine alone remaining."[1]

Support for this belief is sought in the words of Jesus when he said of the bread he had blessed, "Take eat; this is my body" and of the cup, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood" (Matt. 26:26-28). But forcing a *literal* meaning on these words creates numerous problems of interpretation and tends to overlook the fact that the Bible commonly uses figurative expressions.

When some of David's men risked their lives to bring him water from Bethlehem, he refused it, saying, "Is not this the *blood* of men who went in jeopardy of their lives?" (2 Sam. 23:17). The Bible speaks of Jesus as a "door", "vine", and "rock" (John 10:9; 15:5; 1 Cor. 10:4). All recognize these statements are to be understood in a figurative sense. We believe that such is also true of Christ's statement "this is my body...this is my blood." The bread and wine are *symbols* of his body and blood. This does not detract at all from the *reality* of his presence within an assembly of believers, for he promised, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). To reject the idea that he becomes literally

present in pieces of bread or inside a cup of wine is not to reject that he is present *spiritually* among believers!

After Jesus "blessed" the elements, they were not changed into his literal flesh and blood, for he (literally) was still there. He had not vanished away to appear in the form of bread and wine. After he had blessed the cup, he still called it "the fruit of the vine" not literal blood (Matt. 26:29). Since Jesus drank from the cup also, did he drink his own blood? If the wine became actual blood, to drink it would have been forbidden by the Bible (Deut. 12:16; Acts 15:20).

There is no evidence that any change comes to the elements through the Romish ritual. They have the same taste, color, smell, weight, and dimensions. The bread still looks like bread, tastes like bread, smells like bread, and feels like bread. But in the Catholic mind, it is the flesh of God. The wine still looks like wine, tastes like wine, smells like wine, and if one drank enough, it would make him drunk like wine! But this is believed to be the blood of God. When the priest blesses the bread and wine, he says the Latin words, *Hoc est corpus meus.* In view of the fact that no change takes place, we can understand how the expression "hocus-pocus" originated with these words.[2]

The poem on page 125 is not included to be unkind or to ridicule what many sincere people consider a very sacred ceremony. In spite of its crudeness, the poem does make a point.

The learned Council of Trent proclaimed that the belief in transubstantion was *essential to salvation* and pronounced curses on any who would deny it. The Council ordered pastors to explain that not only did the elements of the Mass contain flesh, bones, and nerves as a *part* of Christ, "but also a WHOLE CHRIST."[3] *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says, "The dogma of the totality of the Real Presence means that in each individual species the whole Christ, flesh and blood, body and soul, Divinity and humanity, is really present."[4]

The piece of bread having become "Christ," it is believed that in offering it up, the priest *sacrifices* Christ. A curse was pronounced by the Council of Trent on any who believed otherwise. "If any one saith that in the Mass a true and proper *sacrifice* is not offered to God...let him be anathema."[5] In Catholic belief, this "sacrifice" is a renewal of the sacrifice of the cross. "Christ...commanded that his bloody

A ROMAN MIRACLE

A pretty maid, a Protestant, was to a Catholic wed;
To love all Bible truths and tales, quite early she'd been bred.
It sorely grieved her husband's heart that she would not comply,
And join the Mother Church of Rome and heretics deny.

So day by day he flattered her, but still she saw no good
Would ever come from bowing down to idols made of wood.
The Mass, the host, the miracles, were made but to deceive;
And transubstantiation, too, she'd never dare believe.

He went to see his clergyman and told him his sad tale.
"My wife is an unbeliever, sir; you can perhaps prevail;
For all your Romish miracles my wife has strong aversion,
To really work a miracle may lead to her conversion."

The priest went with the gentleman–he thought to gain a prize.
He said, "I will convert her, sir, and open both her eyes."
So when they came into the house, the husband loudly cried,
"The priest has come to dine with us!" "He's welcome," she replied.

And when, at last, the meal was o'er, the priest at once began,
To teach his hostess all about the sinful state of man;
The greatness of our Savior's love, which Christians can't deny,
To give Himself a sacrifice and for our sins to die.

"I will return tomorrow, lass, prepare some bread and wine;
The sacramental miracle will stop you soul's decline."
"I'll bake the bread," the lady said. "You may," he did reply,
"And when you've seen this miracle, convinced you'll be, say I."

The priest did come accordingly, the bread and wine did bless.
The lady asked, "Sir, is it changed?" The priest answered, "Yes,
It's changed from common bread and wine to truly flesh and blood;
Begorra, lass, this power of mine has changed it into God!"

So having blessed the bread and wine, to eat they did prepare.
The lady said unto the priest, "I warn you to take care,
For half an ounce of arsenic was mixed right in the batter,
But since you have its nature changed, it cannot really matter."

The priest was struck real dumb–he looked as pale as death.
The bread and wine fell from his hands and he did gasp for breath.
"Bring me my horse!" the priest cried, "This is a cursed home!"
The lady replied, "Begone; tis you who shares the curse of Rome."

The husband, too, he sat surprised, and not a word did say.
At length he spoke, "My dear," said he, "the priest has run away;
To gulp such mummery and tripe, I'm not for sure, quite able;
I'll go with you and we'll renounce this Roman Catholic fable."

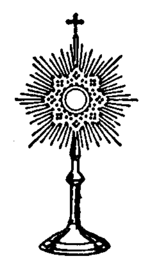
Author Unknown

sacrifice on the Cross should be *daily renewed* by an unbloody sacrifice of his Body and Blood in the Mass under the simple elements of bread and wine."[6] Because the elements are changed into Christ, he "is present in our churches not only in a spiritual manner but really, truly, and substantially as the *victim of a sacrifice.*"[7] Though the ritual has been carried out millions of times, attempts are made to explain that it is the *same* sacrifice as Calvary because the victim in each case is Jesus Christ.[8]

The very idea of Christ—"flesh and blood, body and soul, Divinity and humanity"—being offered repeatedly as a "renewal" of the sacrifice of the cross, stands in sharp *contrast* to the words of Jesus on the cross, "It is *finished*" (John 19:30). The Old Testament sacrifices had to be continually offered because none of them was the perfect sacrifice.But now "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE for all. For every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man (Christ), after he had offered ONE sacrifice for sins *for ever,* sat down on the right hand of God...for by ONE offering he perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified " (Heb. 10:10-14).

Catholic doctrine says the sacrifice of Christ on the cross should "be daily renewed", but the New Testament sets the idea of "daily sacrifices" in contrast to the ONE sacrifice of Christ. He was not to be offered often, for "as it is appointed unto men *once* to die...*so* Christ was ONCE offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. 9:25-28). In view of this, those who believe the sacrifice of the cross should be continually renewed in the Mass, in a sense, "crucify to themselves the Son of God *afresh,* and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:6).

After the bread has been changed into "Christ" by the priest, it is placed on a monstrance in the center of a sunburst design. Before the monstrance Catholics will bow and worship the little wafer as God! This practice, in our opinion, is similar to the practices of heathen tribes which worship fetishes. Is it scriptural? Notice what *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says: "In the *absence* of Scriptural proof, the Church finds a warrant for,



Monstrance

and a propriety in, rendering *Divine worship to the Blessed Sacrament* in the most ancient and constant *tradition*..."[9] This reasoning brings to mind the words of Jesus, "...making the *word of God* of none effect through your *tradition*" (Mark 7:13).

Adopting the idea that the elements of the Lord's Supper become the literal flesh and blood of Christ was not without its problems. Tertullian tells us that priests took great care that no crumb should fall—lest the body of Jesus be hurt! Even a crumb was believed to contain a whole Christ. In the Middle Ages, there were serious discussions as to what should be done if a person were to vomit after receiving communion or a dog or mouse were by chance to eat God's body! At the Council of Constance, it was argued whether a man who spilled some of the blood of Christ on his beard should have his beard burned, or if the beard and the man should be destroyed by burning. It is admitted on all sides that numerous strange doctrines accompanied the idea of transubstantiation.

In the New Testament church it is evident that Christians partook of *both* the bread and the fruit of the vine as emblems of Christ's death (1 Cor. 11:28). This *The Catholic Encyclopedia* admits. "It may be stated as a general fact, that down to the twelfth century, in the West as well as in the East, public Communion in the churches was ordinarily administered and received under *both* kinds," a fact "clearly beyond dispute."[10] *But,* after all these centuries, the Roman Catholic Church began to hold back the cup from the people, serving them only the bread. The priest drank the wine. One argument was that someone might spill the blood of Christ. But was it not possible that the early disciples could have spilled the cup? Christ did not withhold it from them on this basis! Serving only *half* of what Jesus had instituted called for certain "explanations." It was explained that "communion under one kind", as it was called, was just as valid as taking both. The people would not be deprived of any "grace necessary for salvation" and that "Christ is really present and is received whole and entire, body and blood, soul and Divinity, under either species *alone*...holy mother the Church ...has approved the custom of communicating under one kind...Not only, therefore, is Communion under both kinds not obligatory on the faithful, but the chalice is *strictly for-*

bidden by ecclesiastical law to any but the celebrating priest"![11] After many centuries, this law has now been relaxed. Some Catholics are allowed to partake of both bread and cup, but customs vary from place to place.

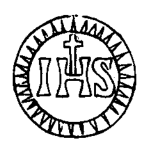
Did the idea of transubstantiation begin with Christ? The historian Durant tells us that the belief in transubstantiation as practiced in the Roman Catholic Church is "one of the oldest ceremonies of *primitive* religion."[12] In the scholarly work *Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,* many pages are devoted to an article "Eating the god." In these pages, abundant evidence is given of transubstantiation rites among many nations, tribes, and religions. Such rites were known in pagan Rome as evidenced from Cicero's rhetorical question about the corn of Ceres and the wine of Bacchus. In Mithraism, a sacred meal of bread and wine was celebrated. "Mithraism had a Eucharist, but the idea of a sacred banquet is as old as the human race and existed at all ages and amongst all peoples," says *The Catholic Encyclopedia.*[13]

In Egypt a cake was consecrated by a priest and was supposed to become the flesh of Osiris. This was then eaten and wine was taken as a part of the rite.[14] Even in Mexico and Central America, among those who had never heard of Christ, the belief in eating the flesh of a god was found. When Catholic missionaries first landed there, they were surprised "when they witnessed a religious rite which reminded them of communion...an image made of flour...after consecration by priests, was distributed among the people who ate it... declaring it was the flesh of the deity."[15]

Hislop suggests that the idea of eating the flesh of a god was of cannibalistic inception. Since heathen priests ate a portion of all sacrifices, in cases of human sacrifice, priests of Baal were required to eat human flesh. Thus "Cahna-Bal", that is, "priest of Baal," has provided the basis for our modern word "cannibal."[16]

During Mass, members of the Romish church in good standing may come forward and kneel before the priest who places a piece of bread in their mouths which has become a "Christ." This piece of bread is called "host", from a Latin word originally meaning "victim" or "sacrifice."[17] *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says that the host "has been the object of a great many miracles" including the bread being

turned to stone and hosts which have bled and continued to bleed.[18]


Host.

Hosts are made in a *round* shape, this form first being mentioned by St. Epiphanius in the fourth century.[19] (The illustration shows the way the "host" appears in a Catholic picture dictionary.) But when Jesus instituted the memorial supper, he simply took bread and *brake* it. Bread does not break into *round* pieces! Breaking the bread actually represents the body of Jesus which was broken for us by the cruel beatings and stripes. But this symbolism is not carried out by serving a round, disk shaped wafer completely whole.

If the use of a round wafer is without scriptural basis, is it possible that we are faced with another example of pagan influence? Hislop says, "The 'round' wafer, whose 'roundness' is so important an element in the Romish Mystery, is only another symbol of Baal, or the *sun*."[20] We know that round cakes were used in the ancient mysteries of Egypt. "The thin, *round* cake occurs on all altars."[21] In the mystery religion of Mithraism, the higher initiates of the system received a small round cake or wafer of unleavened bread which symbolized the *solar disk*,[22] as did their round tonsure.

In 1854 an ancient temple was discovered in Egypt with inscriptions that show little round cakes on an altar. Above the altar is a large image of the *sun*.[23] A similar sun-symbol was used above the altar of a temple near the town of Babain, in upper Egypt, where there is a representation of the sun, before which two priests are shown worshipping. (See illustration).


Egyptian sun image.

This use of the sun-image above the "altar" was not limited to Egypt. Even in far away Peru, this same image was known and worshipped.[24] If there is any doubt that the shape of the host was influenced by sun-worship, one may simply compare the sun-image before which the heathen bowed with

the monstrance sun-image—in which the host is placed as a "sun" and before which Catholics bow—and a striking similarity will immediately be seen.



Sun worship in Peru.

Even among the Israelites, when they fell into Baal worship, sun-images were set up above their altars! But during the reign of Josiah, these images were torn down: "And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images (margin, sun-images) that were *on high above* them" (2 Chron. 34:4). An accompanying old woodcut illustrates some of the strange images that they worshipped, including two sun-images at the top of columns.

Haggadah woodcut (1867) of ancient Jewish Idolatry



The photograph on the next page shows the altar of St. Peter's and huge canopy (the baldachinum)—ninety-five feet high—which is supported by four columns, twisted and slightly covered by branches. At the top of the columns—"on high above" the most important altar in Catholicism—are sun-images like those that were used in pagan worship. High on



Interior of St. Peter's showing sun images.

the wall, as the photograph also shows, is a huge and elaborate golden sunburst image which, from the entrance of the church, also appears "above" the altar. A large sun-image also appears above the altar of the Church of the Gesu, Rome, and hundreds of others. (Illustration on page 132). Interestingly enough, the great temple at Babylon also featured a golden sun-image.[25]

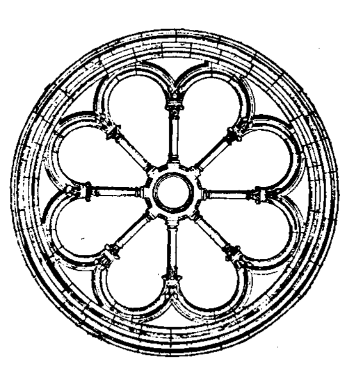
Sometimes the circular sun-image is a stained glass window above the altar or, as is *very common,* above the entrance of churches. Some of these central circular windows are beautifully decorated. Some are surrounded with sun rays. In Babylon there were temples with images of the sun-god to face the rising sun placed above the entries.[26] An early Babylonian temple built by king Gudea featured such an emblem of the sun-god over the entrance.[27] It was a custom for

Egyptian builders to place a solar disk (sometimes with wings or other emblems) over the entrance of their temples—to honor the sun-god and drive away evil spirits. We are not suggesting, of course, that the round designs in use today convey the meanings they once did to those who went to heathen temples. Nevertheless, the similarity seems significant.



Interior of the Church of the Gesu, Rome.

The circular window that has been so commonly used above the entrances of churches is sometimes called a "wheel" window. The wheel design, as the wheel of a *chariot,* was believed by some of the ancients to also be a sun-symbol. They thought of the sun as a great chariot driven by the sun-god who made his trip across the heavens each day and passed through the underworld at night. When the Israelites mixed the religion of Baal into their worship, they had "chariots of the sun"—chariots dedicated to the sun-god (2 Kings 23:4-11). An image in the form of a chariot wheel is placed over the famous statue of Peter in St. Peter's. A tablet now in a British museum shows one of the Babylonian kings restoring a symbol of the sun-god in the temple of Bel. The symbol is an eight pointed cross, like a spoked wheel. A similar design marks the pavement of the circular court before St. Peter's. (See page 43).



Circular stained glass window.

Romish pictures of Mary and the saints always feature a

circular sun-symbol disk around their heads. The Roman tonsure is round. Round images are seen above the altars and entrances. The monstrance in which the round host is placed often features a sun-burst design. All of these uses of sun symbols may seem quite insignificant. But when the over-all picture is seen, each provides a clue to help solve the mystery of Babylon modern.



The round wafers of the Mass are often pictured as circles marked with crosses. We can't help but notice how ⊕⊕⊕ similar these are to the round wafers seen in the drawing of an Assyrian monument which we have reproduced below.



Assyrian monument scene

In this scene, one man is bowing before a priest-king and beneath a sun-image. The second man from the right is bringing an offering of round wafers marked with crosses!

When Jesus instituted the memorial supper, it was at *night*. It was not at breakfast time, or at lunch time. The first Christians partook of the Lord's supper at night, following the example of Christ and the types of the Old Testament. But later the Lord's supper came to be observed at a *morning* meeting.[28] To what extent this may have been influenced by Mithraism, we cannot say. We do know that the Mithraic rites were observed early in the morning, being associated with the sun, with dawn. For whatever reason, it is now a common custom among both Catholic and Protestant churches to take the Lord's "supper" in the morning.

A factor that may have encouraged the early morning Mass within the Catholic church was the idea that a person should be *fasting* before receiving communion. Obviously early

morning was an easier time to meet this requirement! But to require such fasting cannot be solidly built on scripture, for Jesus had just *eaten* when he instituted the memorial supper! On the other hand, those who sought initiation in the Eleusinian mysteries were first asked: "Are you fasting?" If their answer was negative, initiation was denied.[29] Fasting itself is, of course, a Biblical doctrine. But true fasting must come from the heart and not merely because of a man-made rule. Of such, God says, "When they fast, I will not hear their cry" (Jer. 14:12). The Pharisees were strict about fasting on certain days, but neglected the weightier matters of the law (Matt. 6:16). Paul warned about certain commandments to "abstain from meats" as being a mark of apostasy (1 Tim. 4:3).

In commenting on the Mass and its elaborate ritualism, *Romanism and the Gospel* says: "It is a spectacle of gorgeous magnificence—lights, colors, vestments, music, incense, and what has a strange psychological effect, a number of drilled officiants performing a stately ritual in entire independence of the worshippers. These are indeed spectators, not participants, spectators like those who were present at a performance of the ancient *mystery cults.*"[30] A noted work on Catholicism summarizes the mechanical performance made by the priest during Mass: "He makes the sign of the cross sixteen times; turns toward the congregation six times; lifts his eyes to heaven eleven times; kisses the altar eight times; folds his hands four times; strikes his breast ten times; bows his head twenty-one times; genuflects eight times; bows his shoulders seven times; blesses the altar with the sign of the cross thirty times; lays his hands flat on the altar twenty-nine times; prays secretly eleven times; prays aloud thirteen times; takes the bread and wine and turns it into the body and blood of Christ; covers and uncovers the chalice ten times; goes to and fro twenty times."[31] Adding to this complicated ritualism is the use of highly colored robes, candles, bells, incense, music, and the showy pageantry for which Romanism is known. What a contrast to the *simple* memorial supper instituted by Christ!

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Three Days and Nights

MOST OF US have assumed that Jesus died on "Good Friday" and rose from the dead early on "Easter" Sunday morning. Since Jesus said he would rise "the third day," some count part of Friday as one day, Saturday as the second, and part of Sunday as the third. It is pointed out that sometimes an expression like "the third day" can include only *parts* of days, a part of a day being counted as a whole. *The Jewish Encyclopedia* says that the day of a funeral, even though the funeral might take place late in the afternoon, is counted as the first of the seven days of mourning.[1] Other examples of part of a day being counted for a whole day, as it were, are found within the Bible also, as in the following statement by Jesus: "Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Lk. 13:32, 33). In this case, "the third day" would mean the same as "the day following (tomorrow)"—three days, even though only *parts* of those days are involved. Many feel this explains the time element between the burial and resurrection of Christ.

There are other Christians, however, who are not totally satisfied with this explanation. Jesus often said he would rise "the *third* day" (Matt. 16:21; Mk. 10:34). But he also spoke of this time period and gave it as a specific sign of his messiahship as being three days *and* three nights. "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly", he said, "so shall the son of man be THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:38-40).

That the expression "the third day" can, scripturally, include three days and three nights can be seen in Genesis 1:4-13: "God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And

the evening (darkness) and the morning (light) were the FIRST DAY...and the evening (darkness) and the morning (light) were the SECOND DAY...and the evening (now three periods of night) and the morning (now three periods of light) were THE THIRD DAY." This provides an example of how the term "the third day" can be counted up and shown to include three days *and* three nights.

While we have long favored the view we will present here —which allows for three full days and nights—we would hasten to point out that, as Christians, the fact we believe Jesus did live, die, and rose again is infinitely more important than some explanation we may offer regarding the time element of his burial.

Since there are twelve hours in a day and twelve hours in a night (John 11:9, 10), if we figure a full "three days and three nights", this would equal 72 hours. But was the time element *exactly* 72 hours? Jesus was to be in the tomb for "three days *and* three nights" and rise "*after* three days" (Mk. 8:31). We see no reason to figure this as any *less* than a full 72 hours. On the other hand, if he was to be raised from the dead "*in* three days" (John 2:19), this could not be any *more* than 72 hours. To harmonize these various statements, it does not seem unreasonable to assume that the time period was exactly 72 hours. After all, God is a God of EXACTNESS. He does everything right on schedule. Nothing is accidental with him.

It was "when the fulness of time was come"—not one year too early or one year too late—"God sent forth his Son" (Gal. 4:4). The time for his anointing was foreordained and spoken of by the prophet Daniel, as was also the time when he would be "cut off" for the sins of the people. Those who tried to kill him before this failed, for his "time" was not yet come (John 7:8). And not only the year and time of his death, but the very hour was a part of the divine plan. "Father", Jesus prayed, "the hour is come..." (John 17:1).

Since there was an exact time for him to be born, an exact time for his anointing, an exact time for his ministry to begin, an exact time for his death, we have no problem believing there was also an exact time period between his burial and resurrection—72 hours *exactly*. If this is true, then the resurrection took place at the same time of day that Jesus was buried—only three days later. What time of day was

this?

Jesus died shortly after "the ninth hour" or three in the afternoon (Matt. 27:46-50). "The Jews, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away...but when they came to Jesus... he was dead already" (John 19:31-33). By this time, "the even was come" (Mk. 15:42), it was late afernoon. The law said: "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day"(Deut.21:23). In the time remaining in that day before sundown, before the high day sabbath began, Joseph of Arimathaea obtained permission to remove the body. He and Nicodemus prepared the body for burial with linen clothes and spices, and placed it in a nearby tomb (John 19:38-42)—all of this being completed by sundown.

If the resurrection took place at the same time of day as when Jesus was buried—only three days later—this would place the resurrection close to sundown, *not sunrise,* as is commonly assumed. A sunrise resurrection would have required an extra night—three days and *four* nights. This was not the case, of course. Those who came to the tomb at sunrise, instead of witnessing the resurrection at that precise time, found that the tomb was already empty (Mk. 16:2). John's account tells us that Mary Magdalene came to the tomb when "it was yet DARK" on the first day of the week and Jesus was NOT there (John 20:1, 2).

The gospel writers tell of several different visits made by the disciples to the tomb on that first day of the week. In EVERY instance, they found the tomb EMPTY! An angel said "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said" (Matt. 28:6). The first day of the week was when the disciples *discovered* that he was risen (Luke 24:1, 2, etc.), but nowhere does the Bible actually say this was the time of the resurrection.

The only verse which seems to teach a Sunday morning resurrection is Mark 16:9. "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene..." But this verse does not say that early on the first day Jesus was "rising" or that he "did rise" at that time. It says that when the first day of the week came, he "WAS

RISEN"—past perfect tense.

Since there were no punctuation marks in the Greek manuscripts from which our New Testament was translated, the phrase "early the first day of the week" could just as correctly—some think *more correctly*—be linked with the time Jesus appeared to Mary. By simply placing the comma after the word "risen", this verse would read: "Now when Jesus was risen, early the first day of the week he appeared first to Mary Magdalene." This seems to be the meaning originally intended, for the verses that follow show that Mark was recording the various appearances that Jesus made, not explaining on which day the resurrection took place.

When Sunday morning came, Jesus had already risen, the resurrection having taken place just before sundown of the day before. Counting back three days would bring us to Wednesday. Would this make three days and three nights between the burial and resurrection of Christ? Yes. Wednesday night, Thursday night, and Friday night—three nights; also Thursday, Friday, and Saturday—three days. This would make a total of exactly three days and three nights or 72 hours. One day after Wednesday would be Thursday, two days after Wednesday would be Friday, and "the third day" after Wednesday would be Saturday.

The words of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus are a bit difficult. "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel", they said, "and beside all this, to day is the *third* day since these things were done" (Lk. 24:21). Because Jesus appeared to these disciples on the first day of the week (verse 13), and this was "the third day since these things were done", would this not indicate that Jesus died on Friday? This would depend on how we count. If parts of a day are counted as a whole, Friday could be meant. On the other hand, one day "since" Friday would have been Saturday, the second day "since" Friday would have been Sunday, and the *third* day "since" Friday would have been Monday! This method of counting would not indicate Friday.

In seeking to offer an explanation, I submit the following: They had talked about "*all* these things which had happened" (verse 14)—more than just one event. If "these things" included the arrest, the crucifixion, the burial, and the setting of the seal and watch over the tomb, all of these

things were not done until Thursday. Jesus, we have noticed, was crucified on the "preparation" (Wednesday). "The next day (Thursday), that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away" (Matt. 27:62-66). For this reason, the tomb was sealed and guarded. "These things" were not fully completed—were not "done"—until the tomb was sealed and guarded. This happened, as we have already seen, on Thursday of that week, the high day. Sunday, then, would have been "the third day since these things were done", but not the third day since the crucifixion.

Since Jesus was crucified on the day before the sabbath, we can understand why some have thought of Friday as the day of the crucifixion. But the sabbath that followed his death was not the weekly sabbath, but an annual sabbath—"for that sabbath was an *high day*" (John 19:14, 31). This sabbath could fall on any day of the week and that year apparently came on Thursday. He was crucified and buried on the preparation day (Wednesday), the next day was the high day sabbath (Thursday), then Friday, followed by the weekly sabbath (Saturday). Understanding that there were *two* sabbaths that week explains how Christ could be crucifiedon the day *before* the sabbath, was already risen from the tomb when the day *after* the sabbath came—yet fulfilling his sign of three days and three nights.

A careful comparison of Mark 16:1 with Luke 23:56 provides further evidence there were two sabbaths that week—with a common work day between the two. Mark 16:1 says: "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the Mother of James, and Salome, *bought** sweet spices that they might come and anoint him." This verse states that it was *after* the sabbath when these women bought their spices. Luke 23:56, however, states that they prepared the spices and *after* preparing them rested on the sabbath:

* The King James Version is the only translation (of many we have checked) that uses the indefinite "had bought." All others have correctly rendered this as "bought." It is not uncommom for this verse to be read as though the women "brought" spices, but the word is "bought," one letter making the difference!

"And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment." The one verse says it was *after* the sabbath the women bought spices; the other verse says they prepared the spices *before* the sabbath. Since they couldn't prepare the spices until first they had purchased them, the evidence for two different sabbaths that week seems conclusive.

Writing in *Eternity* magazine, its editor, Donald Grey Barnhouse, said: "I personally have always held that there were two Sabbaths in our Lord's last week—the Saturday Sabbath and the Passover Sabbath, the latter being on Thursday. They hastened to take his body down after a Wednesday crucifixion and he was three days and three nights (at least 72 hours) in the tomb." He cites evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls which would place the Last Supper on Tuesday. Not all tradition has favored a Friday crucifixion. He quotes from a Roman Catholic journal published in France that "an ancient Christian tradition, attested to by the Didascalia Apostolorum as well as by Epiphanius and Victorinus of Pettau (died 304) gives Tuesday evening as the date of the Last Supper and prescribes a fast for Wednesday to commemorate the capture of Christ."[2]

Though strongly holding to the Friday crucifixion, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says that not all scholars have believed this way. Epiphanius, Lactantius, Wescott, Cassiodorus and Gregory of Tours are mentioned as rejecting Friday as the day of the crucifixion.[3]

In his book *Bible Questions Answered,* W. L. Pettingill, gives this question and answer: "On what day of the week was our Lord crucified? To us it is perfectly obvious that crucifixion was on Wednesday."[4] *The Companion Bible,* published by Oxford University Press, in its Appendix 156 explains that Christ was crucified on Wednesday.

In his *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible,* Finis Dake has said in his note on Matthew 12:40: "Christ was dead for three full days and for three full nights. He was put in the grave Wednesday just before sunset and was resurrected at the end of Saturday at sunset. ...No statement says that He was buried Friday at sunset. This would make him in the grave only one day and one night, proving his own words untrue."[5]

The quotations given here from various ministers are espe-

cially significant since this belief was not the generally accepted position of the various church organizations with which they were affiliated. In such cases, men speak from conviction, not merely convenience. Such was the case of R. A. Torrey, noted evangelist and Bible institute dean, whose words (written in 1907) well sum up the basic position we have presented here. "...According to the commonly accepted tradition of the church, Jesus was crucified on Friday...and was raised from the dead very early in the morning of the following Sunday. Many readers of the Bible are puzzled to know how the interval between late Friday afternoon and early Sunday morning can be figured out to be three days and three nights. It seems rather to be two nights, one day and a very small portion of another day.

"The solution of this apparent difficulty proposed by many commentators is that 'a day and a night' is simply another way of saying 'a day', and that the ancient Jews reckoned a fraction of a day as a whole day...There are many persons whom this solution does not altogether satisfy, and the writer is free to confess it does not satisfy him at all. It seems to me to be a makeshift...

"The Bible nowhere says or implies that Jesus was crucified and died on Friday. It is said that Jesus was crucified on 'the day before the Sabbath'...Now the Bible does not leave us to speculate in regard to which sabbath is meant in this instance...it was not the day before the weekly sabbath (that is, Friday), but it was the day before the Passover sabbath, which came this year on Thursday—that is to say, the day on which Jesus Christ was crucified was Wednesday. John makes this as clear as day.

"Jesus was buried just about sunset on Wednesday. Seventy-two hours later...he arose from the grave. When the women visited the tomb just before dawn in the morning they found the grave already empty.

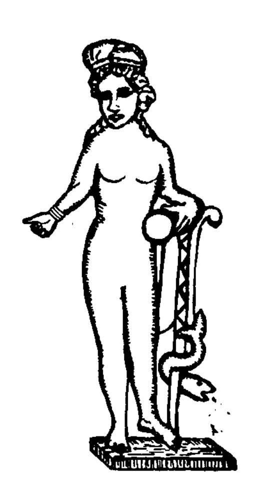
"There is absolutely nothing in favor of Friday crucifixion, but everything in the Scriptures is perfectly harmonized by Wednesday crucifixion. It is remarkable how many prophetical and typical passages of the Old Testament are fulfilled and how many seeming discrepancies in the gospel narratives are straightened out when we once come to understand that Jesus died on Wednesday, and not on Friday."[6]

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Fish, Friday, and the Spring Festival

WE HAVE SEEN from the Scriptures certain reasons for questioning Friday as the day on which Christ was crucified. Yet each Friday, many Catholics abstain from meat—substituting fish in its place—supposedly in remembrance of the Friday crucifixion. Roman Catholics in the United States are no longer required by their church to abstain from meat on Fridays (as formerly)—except during Lent—nevertheless many still follow the custom of fish on Friday.

Certainly the Scriptures never associate fish with Friday. On the other hand, the word "Friday" comes from the name of "Freya", who was regarded as the goddess of peace, joy, and FERTILITY, the symbol of her fertility being the FISH. From very early times the fish was a symbol of fertility among the Chinese, Assyrians, Phoenicians, the Babylonians, and others.[1] The word "fish" comes from *dag* which implies increase or fertility,[2] and with good reason. A single cod fish annually spawns upwards of 9,000,000 eggs; the flounder 1,000,000; the sturgeon 700,000; the perch 400,000; the mackeral 500,000; the herring 10,000, etc.



Venus with fish symbol

The goddess of sexual fertility among the Romans was called Venus. It is from her name that our word "veneral" (as in veneral disease), has come. Friday was regarded as her sacred day because it was believed that the planet Venus ruled the first hour of Friday and thus was called dies Veneris.[3] And—to make the significance complete—the fish was also regarded as being sacred to her.[4] The accompanying illustration as seen in *Ancient Pagan and Modern Chris-*

tian Symbolism shows the goddess Venus with her symbol, the fish.[5]

The fish was regarded as sacred to Ashtoreth, the name under which the Israelites worshipped the pagan goddess. In ancient Egypt, Isis was sometimes represented with a fish on her head, as seen in the accompanying illustration. Considering that Friday was named after the goddess of sexual fertility, Friday being her sacred day, and the fish her symbol, it seems like more than a mere coincidence that Catholics have been taught that Friday is a day of abstinence from meat, a day to eat fish!



Isis and Horus.

We have already noticed why some Christians have rejected Friday as the day of the crucifixion and Easter Sunday morning as the time of the resurrection. From where, then, did Easter observance come? Did the early Christians dye Easter eggs? Did Peter or Paul ever conduct an Easter sunrise service? The answers are, of course, obvious.

The word "Easter" appears once in the King James Version: "...intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people" (Acts 12:4). The word translated "Easter" here is *pascha* which is—as ALL scholars know—the Greek word for *passover* and has no connection with the English "Easter." It is well-known that "Easter" is not a Christian expression—not in its *original* meaning. The word comes from the name of a pagan goddess—the goddess of the rising light of day and spring. "Easter" is but a more modern form of Eostre, Ostera, Astarte, or Ishtar, the latter, according to Hislop, being pronounced as we pronounce "Easter" today.[7]

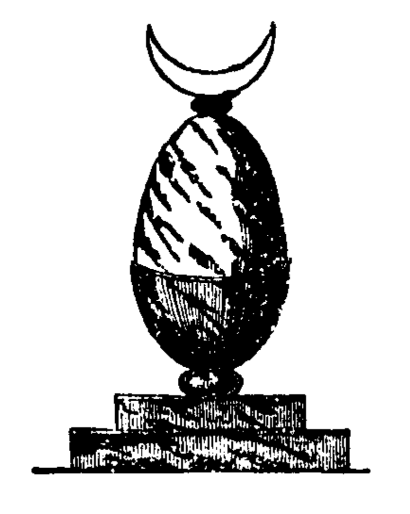
Like the *word* "Easter", many of our *customs* at this season had their beginnings among non-Christian religions. Easter *eggs,* for example, are colored, hid, hunted, and eaten—a custom done innocently today and often linked with a time of fun and frolic for children. But this custom did not originate in Christianity. The egg was, however, a sacred symbol among the *Babylonians* who believed an old fable about an

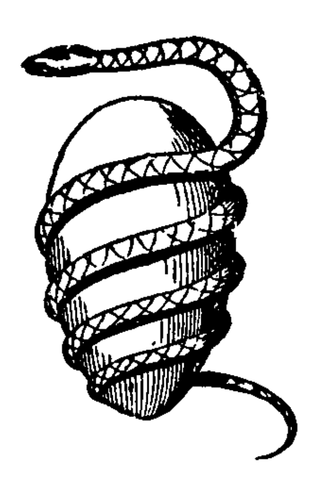


egg of wonderous size which fell from heaven into the Euphrates River. From this marvellous egg—according to the ancient myth—the goddess Astarte (Easter) was hatched. The egg came to symbolize the goddess Easter.[8]

The ancient Druids bore an egg as the sacred emblem of their idolatrous order.[9] The procession of Ceres in Rome was preceded by an egg.[10] In the mysteries of Bacchus an egg was consecrated. China used dyed or colored eggs in sacred festivals. In Japan, an ancient custom was to make the sacred egg a brazen color. In northern Europe, in pagan times, eggs were colored and used as symbols of the goddess of spring. The illustration given below shows two ways the pagans represented their sacred eggs. On the left is the Egg of Heliopolis; on the right, the Typhon's Egg. Among the Egyptians, the egg was associated with the sun—the "golden egg."[11] Their dyed eggs were used as sacred offerings at the Easter season.[12]

Says *The Encyclopedia Britannica,* "The egg as a symbol of fertility and of renewed life goes back to the ancient Egyptians and Persians, who had also the custom of coloring and





eating eggs during their spring festival."[13] How, then, did this custom come to be associated with Christianity? Apparently some sought to Christianize the egg by suggesting that as the chick comes out of the egg, so Christ came out of the tomb. Pope Paul V (1605-1621) even appointed a prayer in this connection: "Bless, O Lord, we beseech thee, this thy creature of *eggs,* that it may become wholesome sustenance unto thy servants, eating it in remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ."[14]

The following quotations from *The Catholic Encyclopedia* are significant. "Because the use of eggs was forbidden during Lent, they were brought to the table of Easter Day, colored red to symbolize the Easter joy...The custom may have its origin in *paganism,* for a *great many pagan customs* celebrating the return of spring, gravitated to Easter"! Such was the case with a custom that was popular in Europe. "The Easter Fire is lit on the top of mountains from new fire, drawn from wood by friction; this is a custom of *pagan* origin in vogue all over Europe, signifying the victory of spring over winter. The bishops issued *severe* edicts against the sacrilegious Easter fires, but did not succeed in abolishing them everywhere." So what happened? Notice this carefully! "The Church *adopted* the observance into the Easter ceremonies, referring it to the fiery column in the desert and to the resurrection of Christ"! Were pagan customs mixed into the Romish church and given the appearance of Christianity? It is not necessary to take my word for it, in numerous places *The Catholic Encyclopedia* comes right out and says so. Finally, one more quote concerns the Easter *Rabbit:* "The rabbit is a *pagan* symbol and has always been an emblem of fertility."[15]

"Like the Easter egg, the Easter hare", says the *Encyclopedia Britannica* "came to Christianity from antiquity. The hare is associated with the moon in the legends of ancient Egypt and other peoples...Through the fact that the Egyptian word for hare, *um,* means also 'open' and 'period', the hare came to be associated with the idea of periodicity, both lunar and human, and with the beginning of new life in both the young man and young woman, and so a symbol of *fertility* and of the renewal of life. As such, the hare became linked with Easter...eggs."[15] Thus both the Easter rabbit and Easter eggs were symbols of sexual significance,

symbols of fertility.

At the Easter season it is not uncommom for Christians to attend sunrise services. It is assumed that such honor Christ because he rose from the dead on Easter Sunday morning just as the sun was coming up. But the resurrection did not actually occur at sunrise, for it was yet DARK when Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and it was *already empty!* On the other hand, there was a type of sunrise service that was a part of ancient sun worship. We do not mean to imply, of course, that Christian people today worship the sun in their Easter sunrise services. Nor do we say that those who bow before the monstrance sun-image with its round, sun shaped host are worshipping the sun. But such practices, being without scriptural example, do indicate that *mixtures* have been made.

In the time of Ezekiel, even people who had known the true God, fell into sun worship and made it a part of their worship. "And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the EAST; and they worshipped the *sun* toward the EAST" (Ezekiel 8:16). The fact that they worshipped the sun toward the east shows it was a *sunrise* service. The next verse says: "...and, lo, they put the branch to their nose." Fausset says this "alludes to the idolatrous usage of holding up a branch of tamarisk to the nose at daybreak whilst they sang hymns to the rising sun."[16]

It was also to the east that the prophets of Baal looked in the days of Elijah. Baal was the sun-god, and so god of *fire.* When Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal with the words, "The God that answers by FIRE, let him be God", he was meeting Baal worship on its own grounds. What time of day was it when these prophets of Baal started calling on him? It was as Baal—the sun—made his first appearance over the eastern horizon. It was at "morning" (1 Kings 18:26), that is, at *dawn.*[17]

Rites connected with the dawning sun—in one form or another—have been known among many ancient nations. The Sphinx in Egypt was located so as to face the east. From Mount Fuji-yama, Japan, prayers are made to the rising sun. "The pilgrims pray to their rising sun while climbing the

mountain sides...sometimes one may see several hundreds of Shinto pilgrims in their white robes turning out from their shelters, and joining their chants to the rising sun."[18] The pagan Mithrists of Rome met together at dawn in honor of the sun-god.

The goddess of *spring,* from whose name our word "Easter" comes, was associated with the sun rising in the *east* —even as the very word "East-er" would seem to imply. Thus the dawn of the sun in the east, the name Easter, and the spring season are all connected.

According to the old legends, after Tammuz was slain, he descended into the underworld. But through the weeping of his "mother", Ishtar (Easter), he was mystically revived in *spring.* "The resurrection of Tammuz through Ishtar's grief was dramatically represented *annually* in order to insure the success of the crops and the fertility of the people. Each year men and women had to grieve with Ishtar over the death of Tammuz and celebrate the god's return in order to win anew her favor and her benefits!"[19] When the new vegetation began to come forth, those ancient people believed their "savior" had come from the underworld, had ended winter, and caused spring to begin.[20] Even the Israelites adopted the doctrines and rites of the annual pagan spring festival, for Ezekiel speaks of "women weeping for Tammuz" (Ezekiel 8:14).

As Christians we believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead in *reality*—not merely in nature or the new vegetation of spring. Because his resurrecton was in the spring of the year, it was not too difficult for the church of the fourth century (now having departed from the original faith in a number of ways) to merge the pagan spring festival into Christianity. In speaking of this merger, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* says, "Christianity...incorporated in its celebration of the great Christian feast day *many* of the heathen rites and customs of the spring festival"![21]

Legend has it that Tammuz was killed by a wild boar when he was forty years old. Hislop points out that forty days—a day for each year Tammuz had lived on earth—were set aside to "weep for Tammuz." In olden times these forty days were observed with weeping, fasting, and self-chastisement—to gain anew his favor—so he would come forth from the underworld and cause spring to begin. This observance was

not only known at Babylon, but also among the Phoenicians, Egyptians, Mexicans, and, for a time, even among the Israelites. "Among the pagans", says Hislop, "this Lent seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Tammuz."[22]

Having adopted other beliefs about the spring festival into the church, it was only another step in the development to also adopt the old "fast" that preceeded the festival. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* very honestly points out that "writers in the fourth century were prone to describe *many* practices (e.g. *the Lenten fast of forty days*) as of *Apostolic* institution which certainly had *no claim to be so regarded*."[23] It was not until the sixth century that the pope officially ordered the observance of Lent, calling it a "sacred fast" during which people were to obstain from meat and a few other foods.

Catholic scholars know and recognize that there are customs within their church which were borrowed from paganism.[24] But they reason that many things, though originally pagan, can be Christianized. If some pagan tribe observed forty days in honor of a pagan god, why should we not do the same, only in honor of Christ? Though pagans worshipped the sun toward the east, could we not have sunrise services to honor the resurrection of Christ, even though this was not the time of day he arose? Even though the egg was used by pagans, can't we continue its use and pretend it symbolizes the large rock that was in front of the tomb? In other words, why not adopt all kinds of popular customs, only instead of using them to honor pagan gods, as the heathen did, use them to honor Christ? It all sounds very logical, yet a much safer guideline is found in the Bible itself: "*Take heed*...that thou inquire not after their gods (pagan gods), saying: How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt *not* do so *unto the Lord* thy God... What thing soever *I* command you, observe to do it; thou shalt *not add* thereto."

CHAPTER TWENTY

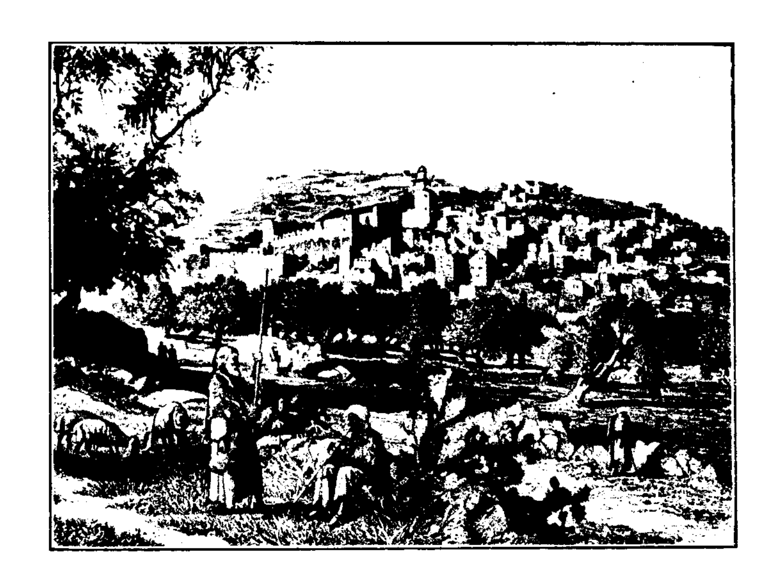
The Winter Festival

CHRISTMAS—DECEMBER 25th—is the day designated on our calendars as the day of Christ's birth. But is this really the day on which he was born? Are today's customs at this season of Christian origin? Or is Christmas another example of mixture between paganism and Christianity?

A look at the word "Christmas" indicates that it is a *mixture.* Though it includes the name of Christ, it also mentions the "Mass." When we consider all of the elaborate ceremonies, prayers for the dead, transubstantiation rites, and complicated rituals of the Roman Catholic Mass, can any truly link this with the historical Jesus of the gospels? His life and ministry were uncomplicated by such ritualism. As Paul, we fear that some have been corrupted "from the *simplicity* that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3) because of pagan influence upon such things as the Mass. Looking at it this way, the word "Christ-mass" is self-contradictory.

As to the actual date of Christ's birth, December 25th is to be doubted. When Jesus was born, "there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8). Shepherds in Palestine did not abide in the fields during the middle of winter! Adam Clarke has written, "As these shepherds had not yet brought home their flocks, it is a presumptive argument that October had not yet commenced, and that, consequently, our Lord was not born on the 25th of December, when no flocks were out in the fields...On this very ground the nativity in December should be given up."[1]

While the Bible does not expressly tell us the date of Jesus' birth, there are indications it was probably in the *fall* of the



Shepherds in Judea.

year. We know that Jesus was crucified in spring, at the time of the passover (John 18:39). Figuring his ministry as lasting three and a half years, this would place the beginning of his ministry in fall. At that time, he was about to be thirty years of age (Luke 3:23), the recognized age for a man to become an official minister under the Old Testament (cf. Numbers 4:3). If he turned thirty in the fall, then his birthday was in the *fall,* thirty years before.

At the time of Jesus' birth, Joseph and Mary had gone to Bethlehem to be taxed (Luke 2:1-5). There are no records to indicate that the middle of winter was the time of taxing. A more logical time of the year would have been in the fall, at the end of the harvest. If this was the case, it would have been the season for the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem which could explain why Mary went with Joseph (cf. Luke 2:41). This would also explain why even at Bethlehem "there was no room in the inn" (Luke 2:7). According to Josephus, Jerusalem was normally a city of 120,000 inhabitants, but during the feasts, sometimes as many as 2,000,000 Jews would gather. Such vast crowds not only filled Jerusalem, but the surrounding towns also, including Bethlehem,

which was only five miles to the south. If the journey of Mary and Joseph was indeed to attend the feast, as well as to be taxed, this would place the birth of Jesus in the *fall* of the year.

It is not essential that we know the exact date on which Christ was born—the main thing being, of course, that *he was born!* The early Christians commemorated the *death* of Christ (1 Cor. 11:26), not his birth. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* says, "Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church. Irenaeus and Tertullian omit it from their lists of feasts."[2] Later, when churches at various places did begin celebrating the birthday of Christ, there was much difference of opinion as to the correct date. It was not until the latter part of the fourth century before the Roman Church began observing December 25th.[3] Yet, by the fifth century, it was ordering that the birth of Christ be forever observed on this date, even though this was the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol, one of the names of the sun-god![4]

Says Frazer, "The largest pagan religious cult which fostered the celebration of December 25 as a holiday throughout the Roman and Greek worlds was the pagan sun worship—Mithraism...This winter festival was called 'the Nativity'—the 'Nativity of the SUN'."[5] Was this pagan festival responsible for the December 25 day being chosen by the Roman Church? We will let *The Catholic Encyclopedia* answer. "The well-known *solar* feast of Natalis Invicti"—the Nativity of the Unconquered Sun—"celebrated on 25 December, *has a strong claim on the responsibility for our December date*"![6]

As pagan solar customs were being "Christianized" at Rome, it is understandable that confusion would result. Some thought Jesus was Sol, the sun-god! "Tertullian had to assert that Sol was not the Christians' God; Augustine denounced the heretical identification of Christ with Sol. Pope Leo I bitterly reproved solar survivals—Christians, on the very doorstep of the Apostles' basilica, turning to adore the rising sun."[7]

The winter festival was very *popular* in ancient times. "In pagan Rome and Greece, in the days of the Teutonic barbarians, in the remote times of ancient Egyptian civilization, in the infancy of the race East and West and North and South, the period of the *winter solstice* was ever a period of rejoicing and festivity."[8] Because this season was so popular,

it was *adopted* as the time of the birth of Christ by the Roman church.

Some of our present-day Christmas customs were influenced by the Roman Saturnalia. "It is common knowledge", says one writer, "that much of our association with the Christmas season—the holidays, the giving of presents and the general feeling of geniality—is but the inheritance from the Roman winter festival of the Saturnalia...survivals of paganism."[9]

Tertullian mentions that the practice of exchanging presents was a part of the Saturnalia. There is nothing wrong in giving presents, of course. The Israelites gave gifts to each other at times of celebration—even celebrations that were observed because of mere custom (Esther 9:22). But some have sought to link Christmas gifts with those presented to Jesus by the wisemen. This cannot be correct. By the time the wiseman arrived, Jesus was no longer "lying in a manger" (as when the shepherds came), but was in a *house* (Matt. 2:9-11). This could have been quite a while after his birthday. Also, they presented their gifts to *Jesus,* not to each other!

The Christmas tree, as we know it, only dates back a few centuries, though ideas about sacred trees are very ancient. An old Babylonish fable told of an evergreen tree which sprang out of a dead tree stump. The old stump symbolized the dead Nimrod, the new evergreen tree symbolized that Nimrod had come to life again in Tammuz! Among the Druids the oak was sacred, among the Egyptians it was the palm, and in Rome it was the fir, which was decorated with red berries during the Saturnalia![10] The Scandinavian god Odin was believed to bestow special gifts at yuletide to those who approacehd his sacred fir tree.[11] In at least ten Biblical references, the *green* tree is associated with idolatry and false worship (1 Kings 14:23, etc.) Since all trees are green at least part of the year, the special mention of "green" probably refers to trees that are evergreen. "The Christmas tree...recapitulates the idea of tree worship...gilded nuts and balls symbolize the sun...all of the festivities of the winter solstice have been absorbed into Christmas day...the use of holly and mistletoe from the Drudic ceremonies; the Christmas tree from the honors paid to Odin's sacred fir."[11]

Taking all of this into consideration, it is interesting to



Decoration of the tree, by Ludwig Richter (1803).

compare a statement of Jeremiah with today's custom of decorating a tree at the Christmas season. "The customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not" (Jer. 10:3, 4).

The people in the days of Jeremiah, as the context shows, were actually making an idol out of the tree, the word "workman" being not merely a lumberjack, but one who formed idols (cf. Isaiah 40:19, 20; Hosea 8:4-6). And the word "axe" refers here specifically to a carving tool. In citing this portion of Jeremiah, we do not mean to infer that people who today place Christmas trees in their homes or churches are *worshipping* these trees. Such customs do, however, provide vivid examples of how *mixtures* have been made.

In the sixth century, missionaries were sent through the northern part of Europe to gather pagans into the Roman fold. They found that June 24th was a very popular day among these people. They sought to "Christianize" this day, but how? By this time December 25th had been adopted by

the Romish church as the birthday of Christ. Since June 24th was approximately six months before December 25th, why not call this the birthday of John the Baptist? John was born, it should be remembered, six months before Jesus (Luke 1:26, 36). Thus June 24th is known on the papal calendar now as St. John's Day!

In Britain, before the entrance of Christianity there, June 24th was celebrated by the Druids with blazing fires in honor of Baal. Herodotus, Wilkinson, Layard, and other historians tell of these ceremonial fires in different countries. When June 24th became St. John's Day, the sacred fires were adopted also and became "St. John's fires"! These are mentioned as such in *the Catholic Encyclopedia.*[13] "I have seen the people running and leaping through the St. John's fires in Ireland", says a writer of the past century, "...proud of passing through unsinged...thinking themselves in a special manner blest by the ceremony."[14] It would seem that such rites would sooner honor *Molech* than John the Baptist!

June 24th was regarded as being sacred to the ancient fish god Oannes, a name by which Nimrod was known.[15] In an article on Nimrod, Fausset says: "Oannes the fish god, Babylon's civilizer, rose out of the red sea..."[16] In the Latin language of the Roman church, John was called JOANNES. Notice how similar this is to OANNES! Such similarities helped promote more easily the mixture of paganism into Christianity.

A day which in pagan times had been regarded as sacred to Isis or Diana, August 15, was simply renamed as the day of the "Assumption of the Virgin Mary" and right up to our present time is still highly honored.[17] Another day adopted from paganism, supposedly to honor Mary, is called "Candlemas" or the "Purification of the Blessed Virgin" and is celebrated on February 2. In Mosaic law, after giving birth to a male child, a mother was considered unclean for forty days (Lev. 12). "And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished", Joseph and Mary presented the baby Jesus in the temple and offered the prescribed sacrifice (Luke 2:22-24). Having adopted December 25 as the nativity of Christ, the February 2 date seemed to fit in well with the time of the purification of Mary. But what did this have to do with the use of candles on this day? In pagan Rome, this festival was observed by the carrying of

torches and *candles* in honor of Februa, from whom our month February is named! The Greeks held the feast in honor of the goddess Ceres, the mother of Proserpina, who with *candle*-bearing celebrants searched for her in the underworld.[18] Thus we can see how adopting February 2 to honor the purification of Mary was influenced by pagan customs involving candles, even to calling it "Candlemass" day. On this day all of the candles to be used during the year in Catholic rituals are blessed. An old drawing shows the pope distributing blessed candles to priests. Says *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* "We need not shrink from admitting that candles, like incense and lustral water, were *commonly* employed in *pagan* worship and in rites paid to the dead."[19]



Pope distributing candles on Candlemas Day.

If the apostle Paul were to be raised up to preach to this generation, we wonder if he would not say to the professing church, as he did to the Galatians long ago, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years, I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain" (Gal. 4:9-11). The context shows that the Galatians had been converted from the pagan worship of "gods" (verse 8). When some had turned "again" to their former worship (verse 9), the days and times they observed were evidently those which had been set aside to honor pagan gods! Later, strangely enough, some of these very days were merged into the worship of the professing church and "Christianized"!

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The Mystery of the Mixture

WE HAVE SEEN—by scores of examples—that a mixture of paganism and Christianity produced the Roman Catholic Church. The pagans worshipped and prayed to a mother goddess, so the fallen church adopted mother-worship under the name of Mary. The pagans had gods and goddesses associated with various days, occupations, and events in life. This system was adopted and the "gods" were called "saints." The pagans used statues or idols of their pagan deities in their worship, so the fallen church did also, simply calling them by different names. From ancient times, crosses in various forms were regarded in superstitious ways. Some of these ideas were adopted and associated with the cross of Christ. The cross as an image was outwardly honored, but the true "finished" sacrifice of the cross became obscured by the rituals of the Mass with its transubstantiation, mystery drama, and prayers for the dead!

Repetitious prayers, rosaries, and relics were all adopted from paganism and given a surface appearance of Christianity. The pagan office and title of Pontifex Maximus was applied to the bishop of Rome. He became known as the pope, the Father of fathers, even though Jesus said to call no man father! In literally hundreds of ways, pagan rites were merged into Christianity at Rome.

Catholic scholars recognize that their church developed from a mixture of paganism and Christianity. But from their point of view, these things were triumphs for Christianity, because the church was able to Christianize pagan practices. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* makes these statements: "We need not shrink from admitting that candles, like incense and lustral water, were commonly employed in *pagan* worship and in the rites paid to the dead. But the Church from a very early period took them into her service, just as she *adopted many other things*...like music, lights, perfumes,

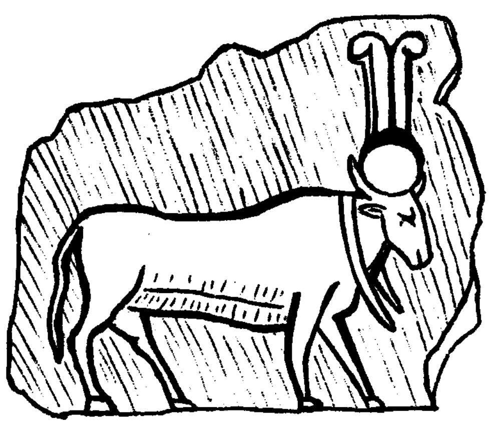
ablutions, floral decorations, canopies, fans, screens, bells, vestments, etc., which were not identified with any idolatrous cult in particular; they were common to almost all cults."[1] "Water, oil, light, incense, singing, procession, prostration, decoration of altars, vestments of priests, are naturally at the service of universal religious *instinct*...Even *pagan* feasts may be 'baptized': certainly our processions of 25 April are the Robigalia; the Rogation days may replace the Ambarualia; the date of Christmas Day may be due to the same instinct which placed on 25 December the Natalis Invicti of the solar cult."[2]

The use of statues, and customs such as bowing before an image, are explained in Catholic theology as having developed from the old emperor worship! "The etiquette of the Byzantine court gradually evolved elaborate forms of respect, not only for the person of Caesar but even for his statues and symbols. Philostorgius...says that in the fourth century the Christian Roman citizens in the East offered gifts, incense, even prayers (!) to the statues of the emperor. (Hist. eccl. II, 17). It would be *natural* that people who *bowed to, kissed, incensed* the imperial eagles and images of Caesar (with no suspicion of anything like idolatry)...should give *the same signs to the cross, the images of Christ, and the altar*... The first Christians were accustomed to see statues of emperors, of *pagan* gods and heroes, as well as *pagan* wall-paintings. *So* they made paintings of their religion, and, as soon as they could afford them, statues of their Lord and of their heroes."[3] It should be noticed that no claim for any *scriptural* command is even suggested for these things. It is clearly stated that these customs developed from paganism.

Sometimes various wall-paintings of the early centuries, such as those in the Roman catacombs, are referred to as though they represented the beliefs of the original Christians. We do not believe this is true, for there is clear evidence of a *mixture*. While these paintings included scenes of Christ feeding the multitudes with the loaves and fishes, Jonah and the whale, or the sacrifice of Isaac, other paintings were unmistakably pagan portrayals. Some feel this "mixture" was a disguise used to avoid persecution, but nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the roots of mixture were present. Says *The Catholic Encyclopedia:* "The Good Shepherd carrying the sheep on his shoulders occurs frequently, and this preference may well be due to its resemblance to the

pagan figures of Hermes Kriophorus or Aristaeus, which at this period were much in vogue...Even the fable of Orpheus was borrowed pictorially and referred to Christ. Similarly the story of Eros and Psyche was revived and Christianized, serving to remind the believer of the resurrection of the body...The group of the Twelve Apostles probably attracted the less attention because the twelve *Dii Majores* were often also grouped together. Again the figure of the *Orans* (q. v.), the woman with arms uplifted in prayer, was quite familiar to classical antiquity...Similarly the fish symbol, representing Christ, the anchor of hope, the palm of victory, were all sufficiently familiar as emblems among *pagans* to excite no particular attention."[4]

In the Old Testament, the apostasy into which the Israelites repeatedly fell was that of *mixture.* Usually they did not totally reject the worship of the true God, but *mixed heathen rites with it!* This was the case even when they worshipped the golden calf (Exodus 32). We all realize that such worship was false, heathenistic, and an abomination in the sight of God. Yet—and this is the point we would make—it was claimed that this was a "feast unto the *Lord*" (verse 5)—a feast to Jehovah (or more correctly) Yahweh, the true God! They sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. They practiced rites in which they made themselves naked (verse 25), perhaps similar to those which were carried out by naked Babylonian priests.[5]



During the forty years in the wilderness, the Israelites carried the tabernacle of God. However, some of them were

not content with this, so they *added* something. They made unto themselves a Babylonian tabernacle that was carried also! "But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun, your images" (Amos 5:26; Acts 7:42, 43). These were but other names for the sun-god Baal and the mother goddess Astarte. Because of this mixture, their songs of worship, sacrifices, and offerings were rejected by God.

At another period, the Israelites performed secret rites, built high places, used divination, caused their children to pass through the fire, and worshipped the sun, moon, and stars (2 Kings 17:9-17). As a result, they were driven from their land. The king of Assyria brought men from various nations, including Babylon, to inhabit the land from which the Israelites had been taken. These also practiced heathenistic rituals and God sent lions among them. Recognizing such as the judgment of God, they sent for a man of God to teach them how to fear the Lord. "Howbeit every nation made gods of their own" (verses 29-31), attempting to worship these gods and the Lord also—a *mixture.* "So" —in this way—"they feared the Lord, *and* made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests...they feared the Lord, *and served their own gods*" (verse 32).

Mixture was also apparent in the days of the judges when a Levite priest who claimed to speak the word of the *Lord* served in a "house of gods" and was called by the title "father" (Judges 17:3, 13; 18:6). At the time of Ezekiel, an idol had been placed right at the entrance of the Jerusalem temple. Priests offered incense to false gods which were pictured upon the walls. Women wept for Tammuz and men worshipped the sun at dawn from the temple area (Ezekiel 8). Some even sacrificed their children and "when they had slain their children to their idols", God said, "then they came *the same day* into *my* sanctuary" (Ezekiel 23:38, 39). Jeremiah's message was directed to people who claimed to "worship the *Lord*" (Jer. 7:2), but who had mixed in paganistic rites. "Behold", God said, "ye trust in lying words that cannot profit. Ye...burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods...make cakes to the queen of heaven...and come and stand before *me* in this house" (verses 8-18).

Considering these numerous Biblical examples, it is clear that God is not pleased with worship that is a *mixture.* As Samuel preached, "If ye do return unto the Lord with *all*

your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Astaroth (the pagan mother worship) from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him *only:* and he will deliver you" (1 Samuel 7:3).



We should remember that Satan does not appear as a monster with horns, a long tail, and a pitchfork. Instead, he appears as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). As Jesus warned about "wolves in sheep's clothing" (Matt. 7:15), so in numerous instances the paganism that was disguised in the outer garments of Christianity became a mixture that has deceived millions. It was like removing the warning label from a bottle of poison and substituting a peppermint candy label in its place. The contents are deadly just the same. No matter how much we may dress it up on the outside, paganism is deadly. True worship must be "in spirit and in *truth*" (John 4:24) —not pagan *error.*

Because of the clever ways that paganism was mixed with Christianity, the Babylonish influence became hidden—a *mystery*—"mystery Babylon." But as a detective gathers clues and facts in order to solve a mystery, so in this book we have presented many Biblical and historical clues as evidence. Some of these clues may have seemed insignificant at first glance or when taken alone. But when the full picture is seen, they fit together and conclusively solve the mystery of Babylon—ancient and modern! Over the centuries God has called his people out of the bondage of Babylon. Still today his voice is saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins" (Rev. 18:4).

It is a delicate task to write concerning religious subjects on which very fine and sincere people have strong differences. One wants to speak frankly enough to make a point, yet also to maintain a proper balance so that in *disagreeing* he is not needlessly *disagreeable*. As with any book—certainly not excluding the Bible—it is inevitable that some misunderstanding or differences of opinion will result. Some may feel too much has been said, others not enough. Nevertheless, in the words of Pilate, "What I have written I have written." If the Roman Catholic Church which claims to never change is gradually turning from practices which some of us consider heathenistic, we can be glad for any progress along the path of truth. If this book has had any part in this trend, we can rejoice.

We believe the true Christian goal is not religion based on mixture, but a return to the original, simple, powerful, and spiritual faith that was once delivered to the saints. No longer entangling ourselves in a maze of rituals or powerless traditions, we can find the "simplicity that is in Christ", rejoicing in the "liberty wherewith Christ has made us free" from "bondage" (2 Cor. 11:3; Gal. 5:1).

Salvation is not dependent on a human priest, Mary, the saints, or the pope. Jesus said, *"I am the way,* the truth, and the life: *no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6). "Neither is there salvation *in any other:* for there is *none other name* under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Let us look to JESUS who is the author and finisher of our faith, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, the Lamb of God, the Captain of our Salvation, the Bread from Heaven, the Water of Life, the Good Shepherd, the Prince of Peace, the King of kings and Lord of lords!

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4. Hislop, *The Two Babylons.*
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3. Hislop, *The Two Babylons,* p. 20.
4. Ibid.
5. Bach, *Strange Sects and Curious Cults,* p. 12.
6. Frazer, *The Golden Bough,* vol. 1, p. 356.
7. *Encyclopedia Britannica,* vol. 14, p. 309.
8. *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol. 15, p. 459, art. "Virgin Mary."
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12. *Harper's Bible Dictionary,* p. 47.
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15. Weigall, *The Paganism in Our Christianity,* p. 129.

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6. Doane, *Bible Myths,* p. 357.
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3. Ibid.
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5. *Encyclopedia of Religions,* vol. 2, p. 78.
6. Williams, *The Historians' History of the World,* vol. 1, p. 518.
7. Dobbins, *Story of the World's Worship,* p. 621.
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11. Urlin, *Festivals, Holy Days, and Saints' Days,* p.26.
12. *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol, 2, p. 44, art. "Athens."
13. *Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,* art. "Images and Idols."
14. *The Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol. 7, p. 636, art. "Idolatry."
15. Ibid., p. 620, art. "Iconoclasm."
16. Inman, *Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism,* p. 35.

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15. Brown, *Sex Worship and Symbolism of Primitive Races*, p. 38.
16. Eichler, *The Customs of Mankind*, p. 55.

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3. Seymour, *The Cross in Tradition, History, and Art*, p. 157.
4. Vine, *An expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 256.*
5. Seymour, *The Cross in Tradition, History, and Art*, pp. 22, 26.
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3. *The Catholic Encyclopedia.* vol. 4, p. 300, art. "Constantine."
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